BLOOMSBURY

Concise Foraging Guide

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The Wildlife Trusts are made up of 46 independent charities, covering the whole of the UK and the Isle of Man and Alderney. Together, The Wildlife Trusts are the largest voluntary organisation of nature lovers who are dedicated to protecting and restoring wildlife and wild places everywhere – on land and at sea. They are supported by 860,000 members, including 150,000 young people in their junior branch, Wildlife Watch. Every year The Wildlife Trusts work with thousands of schools and community groups, and their nature reserves and visitor centres receive millions of visitors.

The Wildlife Trusts work in partnership with hundreds of landowners and businesses in the UK. Building on their existing network of 2,300 nature reserves, The Wildlife Trusts are advocating for a wilder future, with 30% of land and sea restored for nature by 2030. This will be achieved by restoring, recreating and reconnecting wildlife habitat and by changing policy, and is paramount to addressing the nature and climate emergency in the UK.

In The Wildlife Trusts' vision of a wilder future, the natural environment is adapting well to a changing climate, and people are inspired by our wildlife and value it for the many ways in which it supports our quality of life. Healthy ecosystems provide us with many services, including carbon storage, clean air and water, as well as flood mitigation.

All 46 Wildlife Trusts are members of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (registered charity number 207238). To find your Wildlife Trust, visit wildlifetrusts.org

An Introduction to Foraging

The art of foraging is almost as ancient as humanity itself. Thousands of years ago, before early humans turned to farming at the end of the Stone Age, they sustained themselves by hunting wild animals and gathering plants to feed their communities, a behaviour so vital to their survival that it was the only form of sustenance for 90 per cent of human history. In a world before online shopping and takeaways, foraging was an essential part of daily life. Nowadays we are fortunate in the UK to have access to secure, affordable and varied food production, so is it still worth learning how to forage our own food from the wild?

In modern-day Britain, most people who forage plants and mushrooms do so for the enjoyment, rather than necessity. Yet foraging can still be an important part of modern human survival in developed countries and across all cultures. In the UK during World War II, rosehip syrup became a popular source of vitamin C when citrus fruits became more difficult to import. In Copenhagen, the famed Noma restaurant's 'wild food' menu has encouraged a resurgence in a once-common Scandinavian pastime. And in Japan, citizens have relied on the art of seeking *sansai* ('mountain vegetables') to stave off starvation in times of war, drought and natural disaster.

Today, foraging wild food can be an ethical and rewarding hobby that helps us reconnect with both the natural world and the food on our plate, two areas that, to our detriment, we have become disengaged with as a species. When carried out sustainably and respectfully, foraging is an environmentally friendly way to source food, as there is no reliance on chemicals and pesticides, no disposable packaging, the plants are seasonal and organic, and there is no carbon footprint from importing and transportation. Even better, foraging is essentially free and accessible to everyone, whether you live in the countryside or the inner-city.

It is also a great way to spend more time in nature and connect with the world around us. Not only does foraging encourage us to learn about different types of trees, shrubs, seaweeds, herbs, nuts, fruits, seeds and mushrooms, it also helps us engage with the landscape as a whole. When we keep a closer eye on the natural world, we are more likely to notice wildlife such as birds and insects, protect their habitats and appreciate the fragility and complexity of our ecosystems. Time spent outdoors has been proven to enhance our physical and mental wellbeing, and foraging is an easy way to reconnect with the seasons and cycles of nature, as well as exploring the origins of our food.

Foraging Safely and Legally

A good forager is an ethical one. To ensure plant populations remain healthy and leave plenty for the birds and other wildlife with whom we share our wild food, forage only the amounts you need. Where species are listed as rare or uncommon, pick them only in tiny quantities. It's sensible to work out how much you genuinely need before you harvest any species as it's easy to get carried away and pick more than you can cook with when you come across an abundant plant. It is also important to consider the different impacts on habitats of picking leaves or flowers or uprooting an entire plant. A

partially foraged plant can usually regenerate and survive, but an uprooted plant is gone forever.

Before you forage, you must know the legalities of picking wild plants in your country as well as the area you are in since local bylaws may be in place to prevent foraging. Remember to keep to public places and steer clear of private land. Never forage plants from nature reserves or other wildlife-sensitive or protected areas. And avoid foraging along the edges of large agricultural fields – which have often been treated with chemicals – and alongside busy roads – where airborne pollutants may be an issue. Similarly, avoid popular dog-walking routes. Pregnant women should be careful with one or two species, such as bog myrtle and chamomile, as these can cause complications. In terms of identification, the golden rule is that if you're not 100 per cent sure what something is, don't pick it. There are many other resources – including the internet – that can help you clarify what you've found. However, if you're still not entirely sure about a new species, it simply isn't worth the risk.

Storing, Preserving and Preparing Foraged Food

The great thing about eating seasonal produce is enjoying a natural variety throughout the year. Sometimes, however, it makes sense to prolong a plant's natural lifespan through preservation. When we turn fresh produce into jams, pickles, drinks and condiments, it helps preserve their best qualities and enables us to enjoy them for longer, reducing food waste and enriching our kitchen cupboards

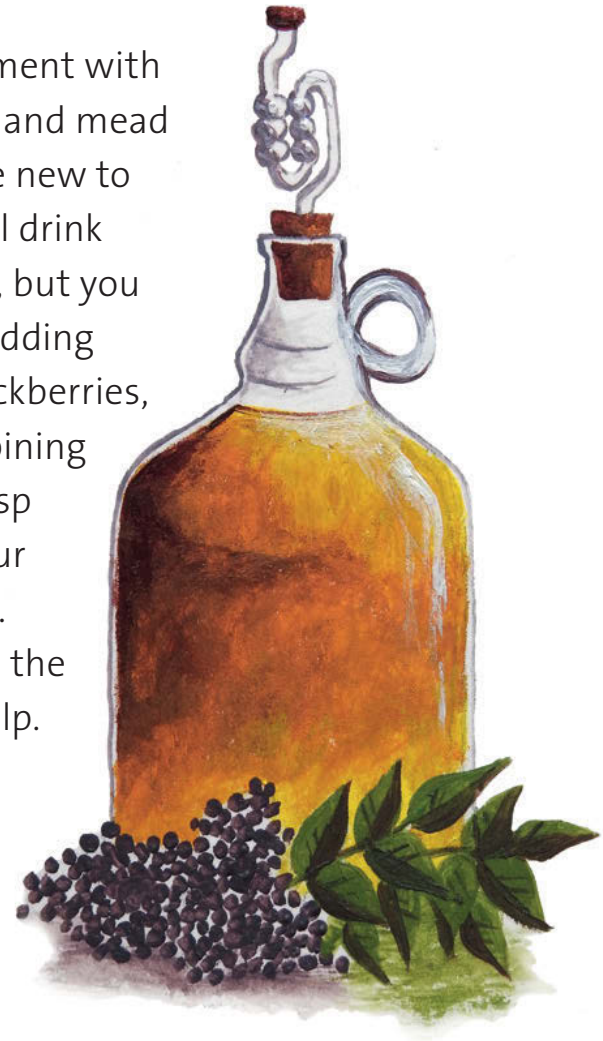
at the same time. The primary natural ingredients used in preservation include salt, sugar, citric acid (found in lemons and other citrus fruits), vinegar and oil. Some of the most straightforward techniques to preserve food are drying, pickling, fermentation, freezing, homebrewing, salt curing, and making jams and jellies. Below I have included a selection of simple preservation techniques to try at home and make the most of your foraged finds.

How to make fruit jam

Making jam is a useful method for using up hedgerow fruits, which will last many months if stored with a tightly fitting lid in the fridge. As a general rule, you will need to use ingredients in the following proportions: one part hedgerow fruit, such as blackberries, elderberries, wild strawberries or blackcurrants; one part cooking apples or crab apples, for natural pectin to help the jam set; two parts cane, golden or granulated sugar. Wash the fruit thoroughly before peeling and slicing any larger fruits into small chunks. Place all the fruit into a pan and heat gently to release the juices. After a few minutes, add the sugar and a splash of lemon juice. Leave to simmer for 20 minutes, stirring well, and when thickened and jam-like, store in clean, sterilised jars.

How to make mead

Homebrewing is a fun way to experiment with foraged fruits and different flavours, and mead is a great recipe to start with if you're new to brewing alcohol. Mead is a traditional drink made of fermented honey and water, but you can experiment with the flavour by adding hedgerow fruits like elderberries, blackberries, sloes and cloudberries. Start by combining 1.2kg honey, 1.9 litres fresh water, 1tsp dried yeast and a good handful of your chosen fruits in a sterilised demijohn. Swirl around thoroughly to distribute the honey – a long wooden spoon can help. Secure the airlock and leave at room temperature for four to six weeks, then sieve the mixture into bottles and leave to ferment for a year before drinking.

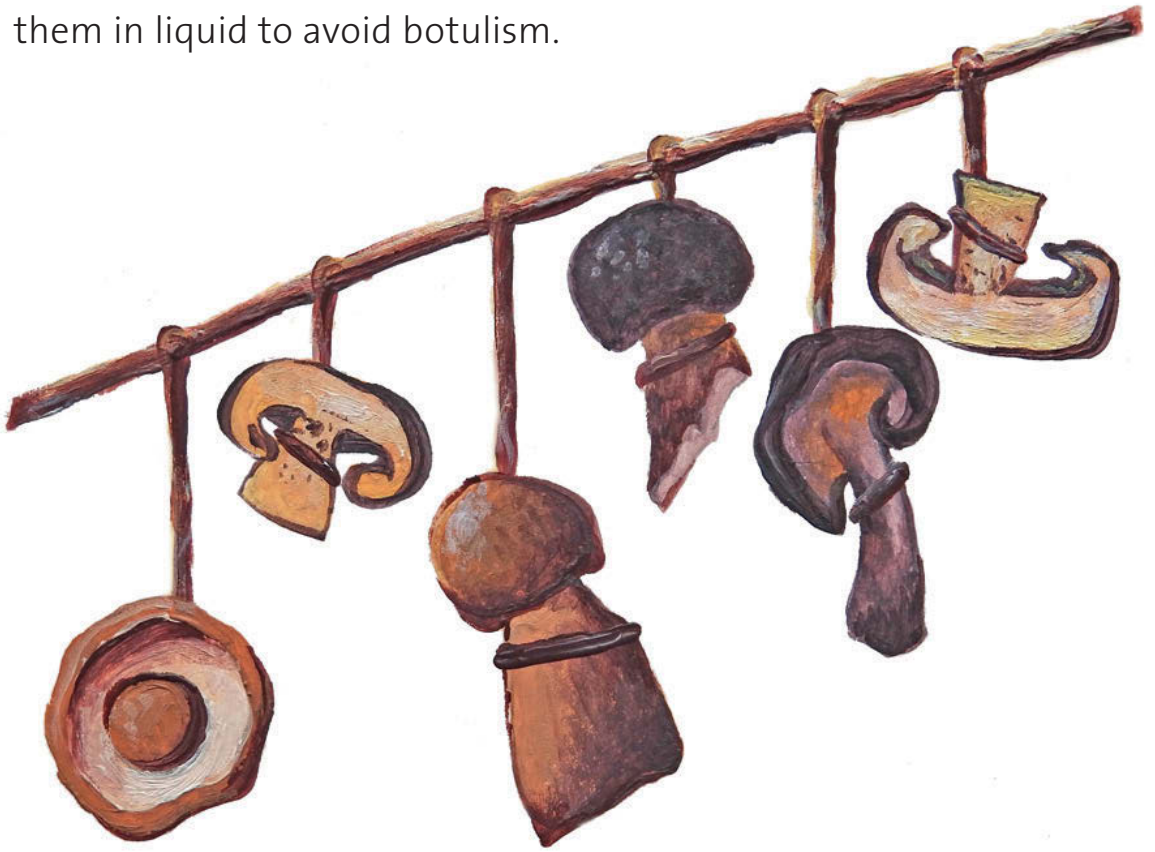


How to dry herbs

Although herbs are usually best used fresh, it's a good idea to dry and store a few bunches to last through the year. This method works well with wild herbs like marjoram, thyme, woodruff, chamomile and yarrow. Slow air-drying is the easiest and least expensive way to dry fresh herbs, as well as helping retain the flavour and essential oils. Gather herbs before they flower, just after the dew has evaporated in the morning. Bundle four to six stems together and tie as a bunch, then place inside a paper bag, punching a few holes in the bag to allow air to flow through. Hang the bag in a warm, airy room until the herbs are dry and crispy. Store the dried herbs in airtight containers and use within a year.

How to store mushrooms

There are three easy ways to preserve mushrooms: drying; pickling; and storing in olive oil. First, clean the mushrooms with a dry brush and slice them up. To dry the slices, either air-dry them in a similar way to fresh herbs, or place them on a baking sheet in the oven for two hours at your oven's lowest temperature to retain as many nutrients as possible. Keep an eye on them, to avoid them burning, and turn them halfway through. To pickle your dried mushrooms, bring a pot of one-part water to one-part vinegar to boil and simmer the mushroom slices for 15 minutes. Leave to cool slightly, then place the mushrooms and their liquid into sterilised jars, adding raw garlic and peppercorns for extra flavour. To store in olive oil, follow the same technique until you add the mushroom slices into the jars, then top up with olive oil and just a dash of the vinegar mixture. You could also add garlic and other herbs to enhance the flavour. It's important to always cook the mushrooms before storing them in liquid to avoid botulism.

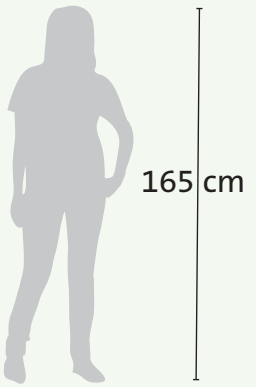


How to forage shellfish safely

When looking for shellfish, avoid foraging in locations where pollution from, for example, sewage works or residential areas could have contaminated the water. Do some research online or ask locals if you're unsure, and always check local tide times. Never forage from jetties or piers – it's important to only forage shellfish from areas that you know have been covered by seawater every day, so it makes sense to look for shellfish at low tide. Choose the biggest, healthiest-looking specimens you can find and wash them thoroughly, removing any mud and sand, and scrubbing off beards and barnacles, before leaving them in a bucket of clean, filtered seawater or salted fresh water (35g of sea salt to every litre) overnight to allow them to clean themselves. Mussels should go through two changes of fresh water. Before cooking, check all your shellfish are still alive. You can assume a shellfish is dead if it is already open, opens wide easily or doesn't close itself again when you try to pry its shell open slightly. When you are ready to cook them, discard any shellfish that appear to be dead, as well as any that do not open when cooked.

A Note on the Artworks

A silhouette of an average-sized (165cm tall) human is shown alongside tree artworks to assist with identifying trees and shrubs while you are foraging.



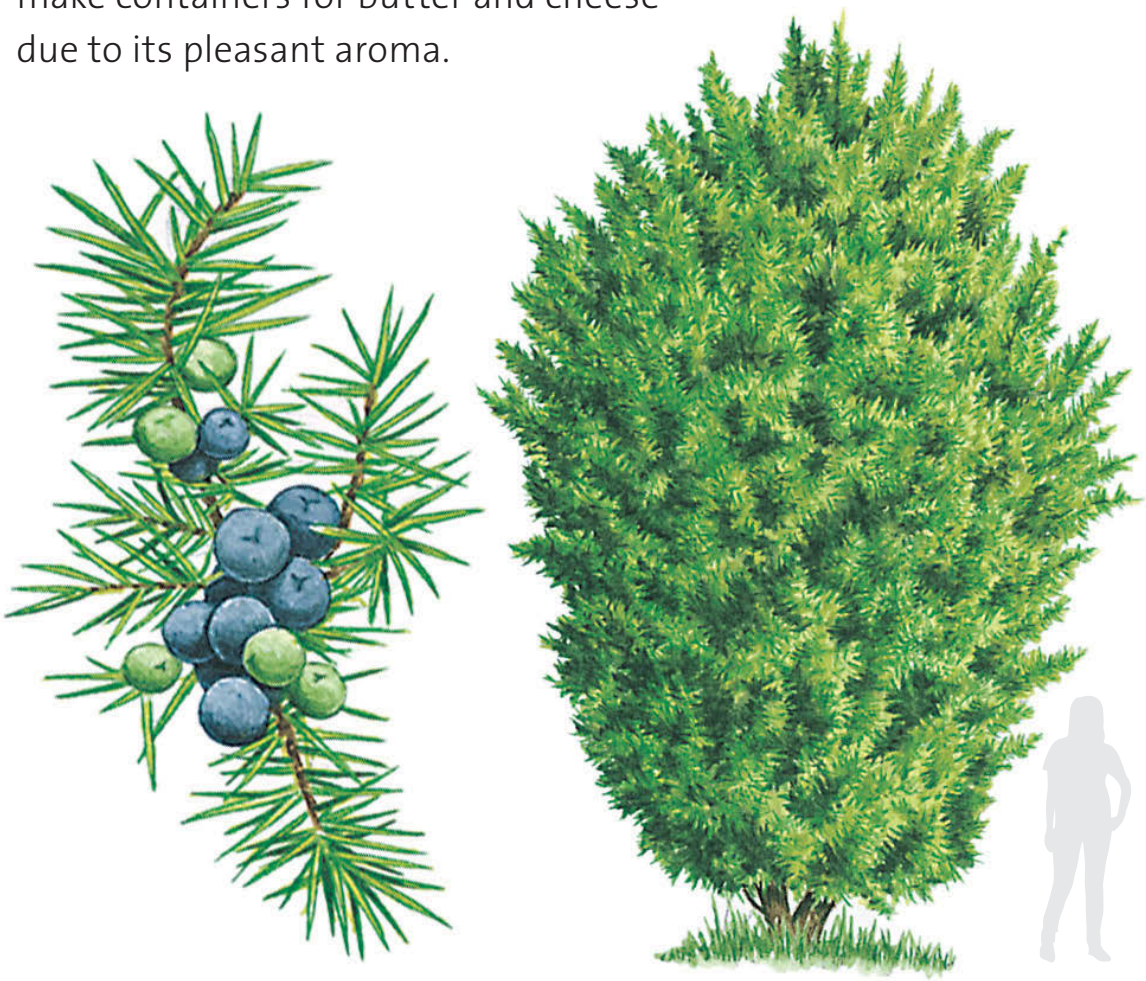
Juniper

Juniperus communis

Description A small, bushy tree or shrub, reaching 6m tall. Reddish bark and needle-like leaves, blue-green with a white stripe running through the middle. Berries are blue-black when ripe.

Distribution Native to chalk lowland, moorland and pine woodland in most areas of the temperate northern hemisphere, but uncommon across much of Britain.

Uses Berries can be used in marinades and dry rubs for dark meats like venison, beef and lamb. They can also be infused as a herbal tea, blended into a pâté with duck or mushrooms, or added to sweet desserts with orchard fruits. In Scandinavia, the wood is used to make containers for butter and cheese due to its pleasant aroma.



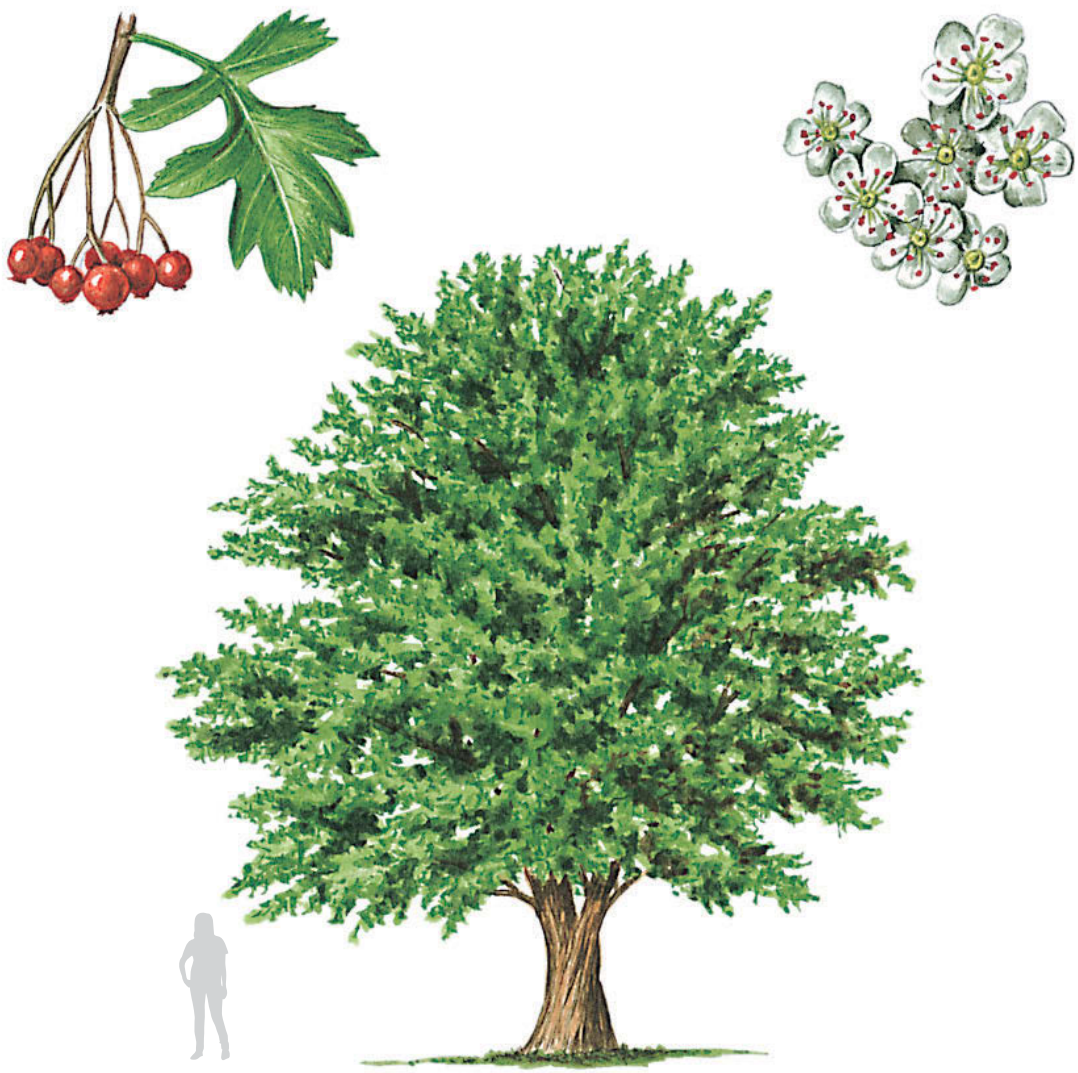
Common Hawthorn

Crataegus monogyna

Description A dense, thorny tree with a rounded crown, reaching 10–16m tall. Leaves are shiny green with clusters of creamy-white flowers in spring and small, red berries in autumn.

Distribution Native to Europe, where it is widespread.

Uses Too dry to eat raw, the berries make a good addition to hedgerow jelly as they are naturally high in pectin and set easily. They can also be infused in vinegar, tea or cordial. Young leaves have a delicate flavour and can be chopped and added to potato salad.



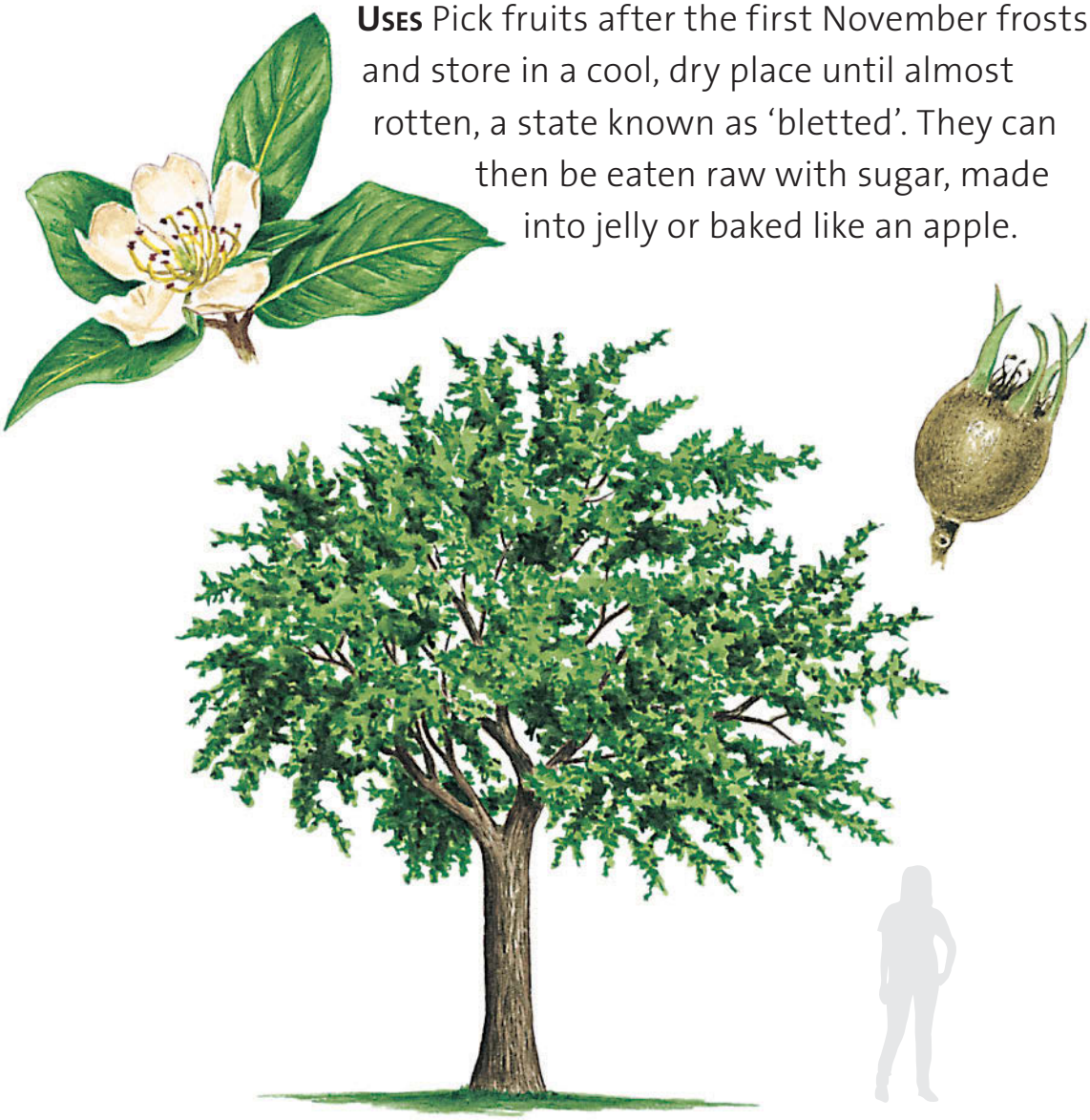
Medlar

Mespilus germanica

Description A small tree or spreading shrub, growing up to 6m tall and 6m wide. Cracked, grey-brown bark and dark yellow-green leaves. Flower has five white petals that develop into a dull brown fruit around 5–6cm in diameter, surrounded by sepals with long, pale tips, forming a crown.

Distribution Native to south-eastern Europe. Widely naturalised in western and central areas, but very rare in Britain.

Uses Pick fruits after the first November frosts and store in a cool, dry place until almost rotten, a state known as 'bletted'. They can then be eaten raw with sugar, made into jelly or baked like an apple.



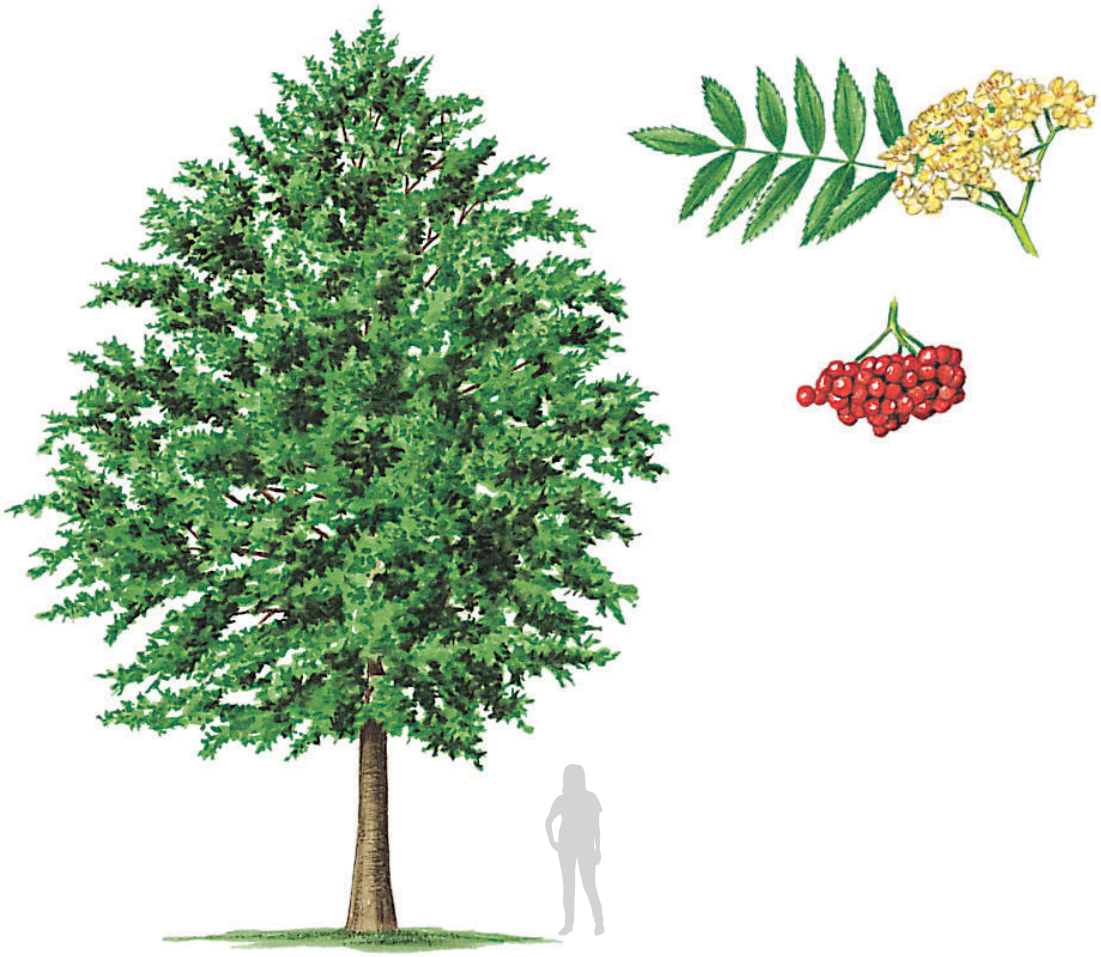
Rowan

Sorbus aucuparia

Description A deciduous tree reaching 5–20m tall. Bark is smooth, shiny and grey, and leaves are pinnate with serrated margins. Large clusters of creamy-white flowers in spring. Fruits are red-orange berries that ripen by August and are popular with wintering birds. Also known as mountain ash.

Distribution Widely distributed in Britain and most of Europe, commonly planted in streets, parks and gardens.

Uses Berries can be eaten raw but they are extremely sour and are best simmered down into syrups, jams and jellies. Rowan jelly is delicious with cheeseboards and meat, but remember to add cooking apples or crab apples for pectin (needed to set).



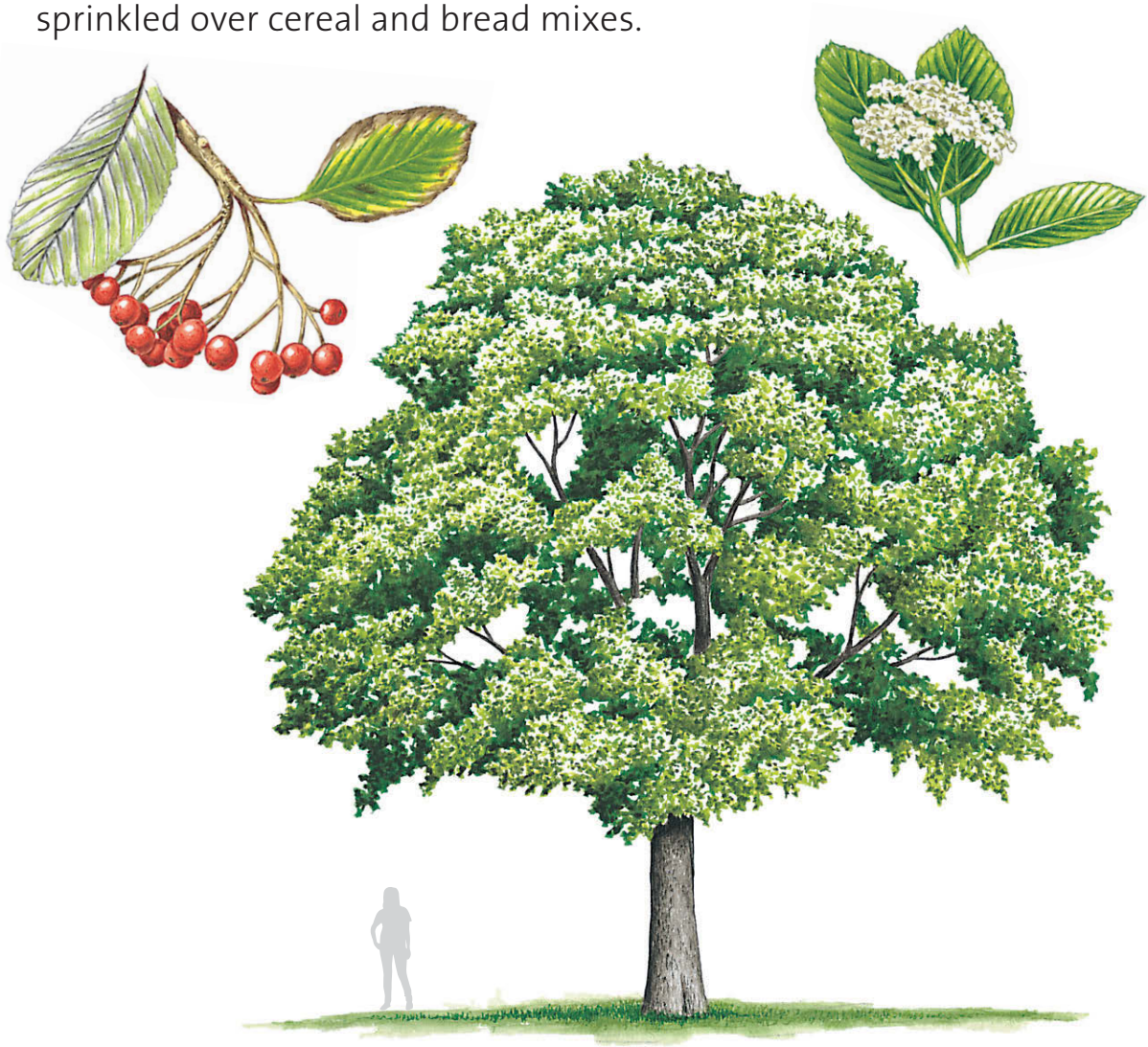
Whitebeam

Sorbus aria

Description A small, deciduous tree growing up to 12m tall and 8m wide. Smooth, grey bark and oval leaves that are bright green above and pale green below. The white, five-petalled flowers ripen into red oval-shaped fruits.

Distribution Native to southern Britain and central and southern Europe. Mostly confined to mountains.

Uses Fresh fruits are best stored in a cool, dry place until almost rotten, a state known as 'bletted'. They can then be eaten raw or cooked, or dried and ground into a coarse powder that can be sprinkled over cereal and bread mixes.



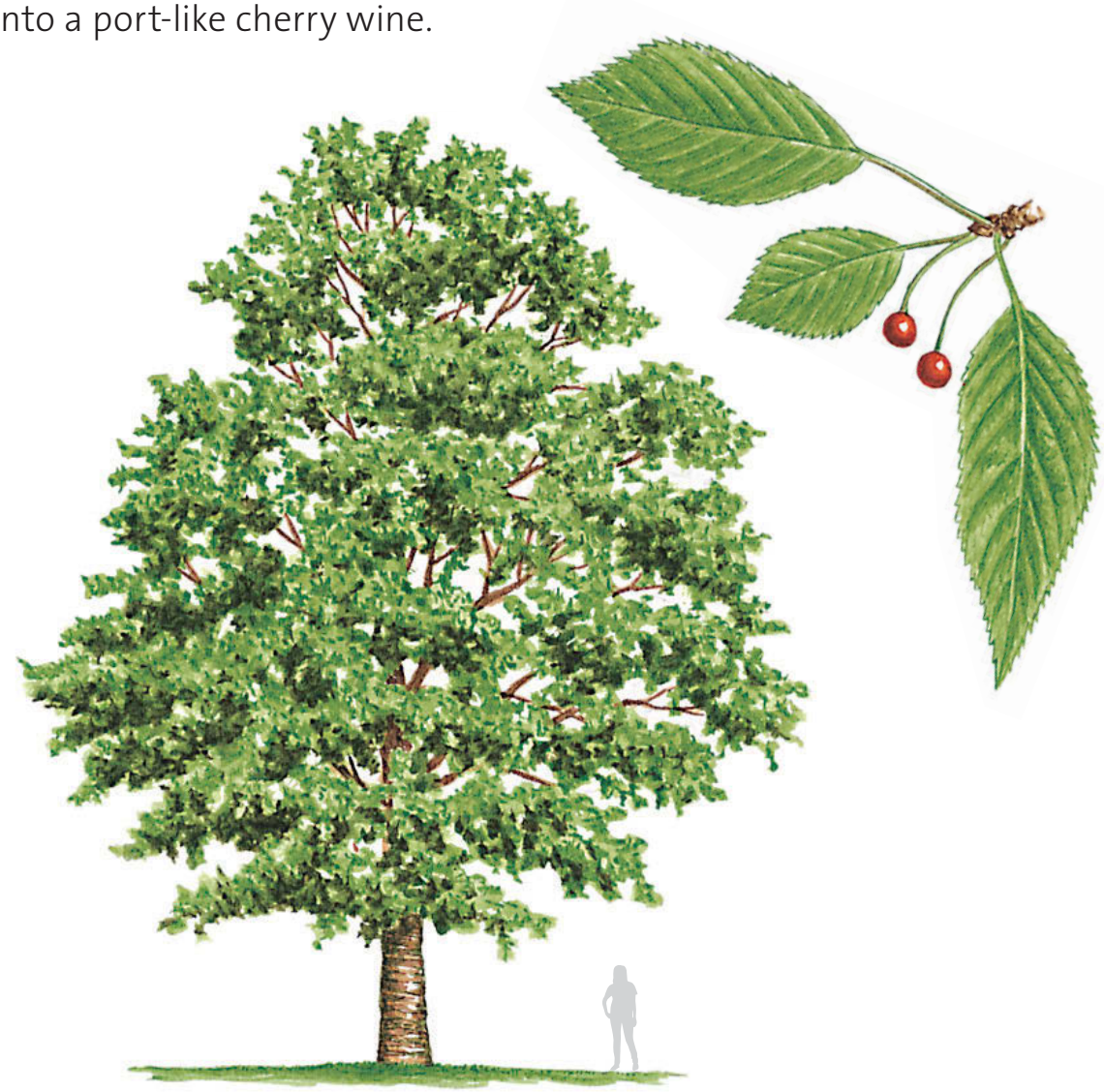
Wild Cherry

Prunus avium

Description A large, deciduous tree reaching 18m tall. Shiny, red-brown bark that peels in horizontal bands. Oval, pointed leaves with serrated edges. Clusters of white, five-petalled flowers open in mid-April. Fruits change colour from yellow to bright red, before ripening to blackish-red.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

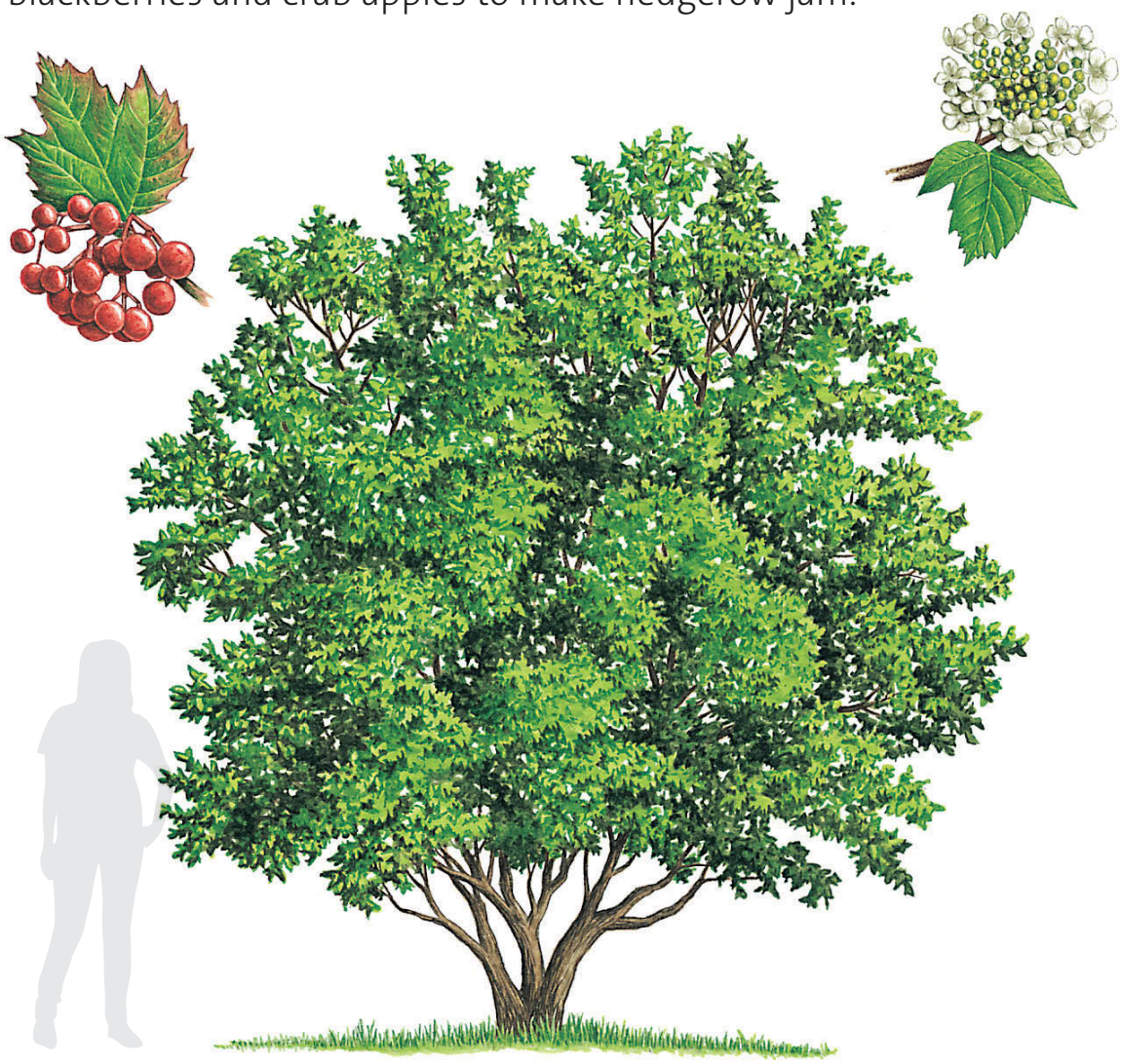
Uses Fruits are generally sweet and can be eaten raw, or simmered and stewed for pies, crumbles and jams. They can also be brewed into a port-like cherry wine.



Guelder Rose

Viburnum opulus

Description A large, deciduous shrub with oval or heart-shaped leaves, reaching 4m tall. Flowers have five white petals and are arranged in clusters, similar to a hydrangea. They ripen into juicy, globular red fruits around 6–9mm in diameter, from late summer onwards.
Distribution Widespread and common throughout Britain and Europe.
Uses The fruits are sweetly scented and very juicy. They can be eaten raw in small quantities, but they taste much better when simmered down into jam or jelly. Can be combined with rowan, hawthorn, blackberries and crab apples to make hedgerow jam.



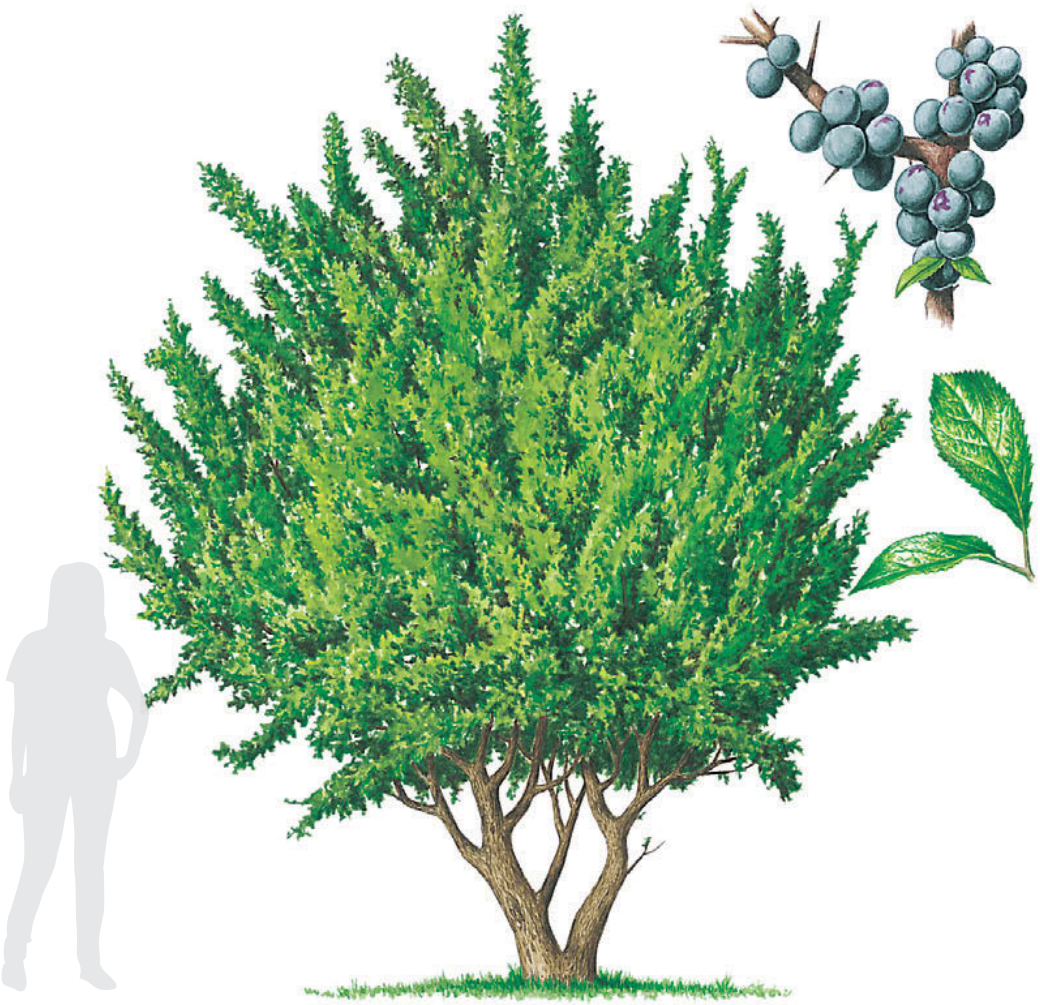
Blackthorn

Prunus spinosa

Description A dense shrub reaching 4m tall, with thick branches covered in solid spikes that give the species its name. Solitary five-petalled blossoms appear in spring before the leaves. These then ripen into dark blue-black fruits (sloes) around 15mm in diameter.

Distribution Common and widely distributed throughout Britain and Europe, except in the far north.

Uses Good for infusing with gin and sugar to make sloe gin, or add damsons to enrich the flavour further. The berries can also be added to hedgerow jelly with other wild fruits, or simmered down into syrup to pour over desserts and ice cream.



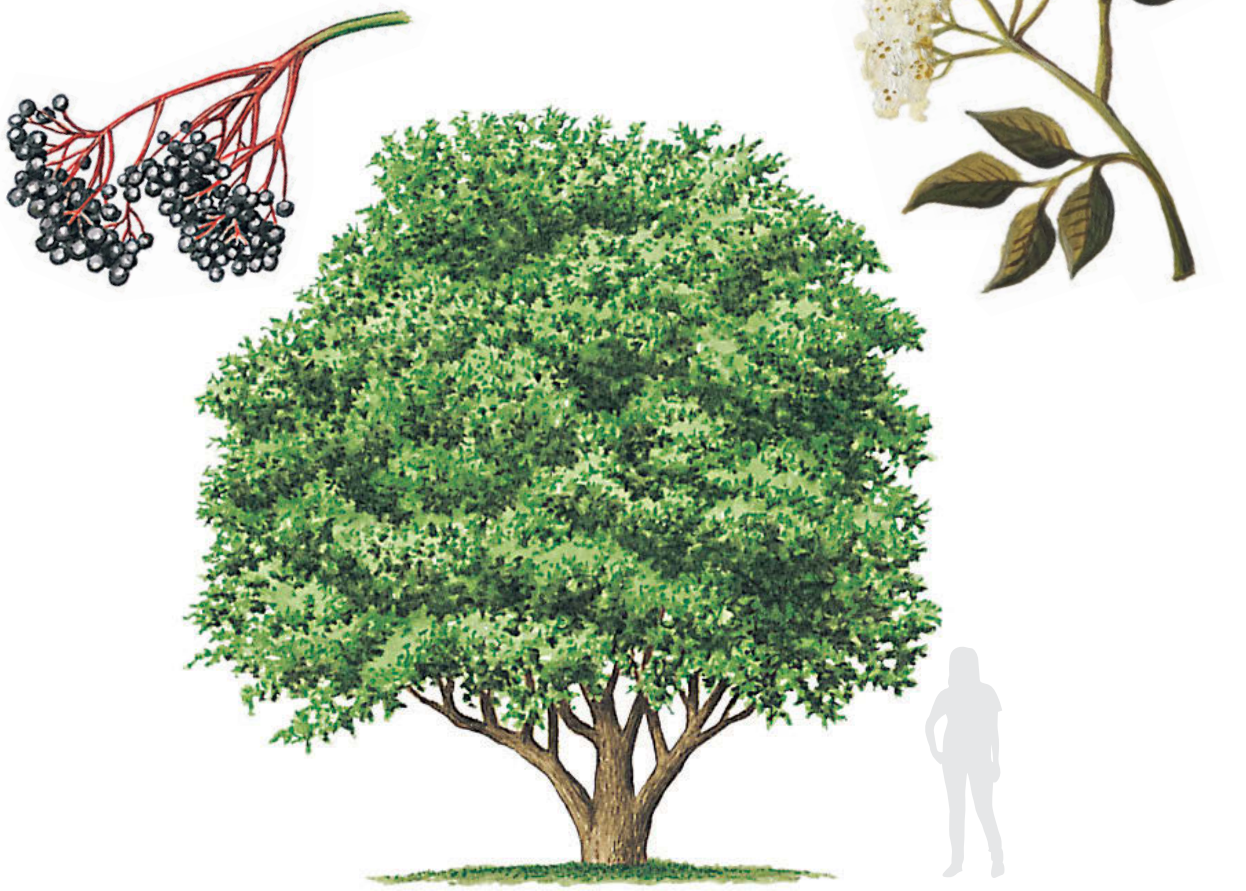
Elder

Sambucus nigra

Description A small, deciduous tree or shrub reaching 6m tall, with arching branches and thick, brownish-grey bark. Leaves are ovate and sharply toothed, and flowers are small and sweetly fragrant with five white petals, arranged in 10–25cm clusters. Fruits are small, dark and round, starting off green but turning black and fleshy as they ripen, with reddish stems.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Elderflower blossom can be used in cordials, cakes or sparkling wine for a delicate floral flavour. Later in the year, the berries can be sprinkled over porridge, used to make wine, mead, cordial, crumble, syrup, jam, jelly and chutney, or swirled into fruit buns with lemon icing.

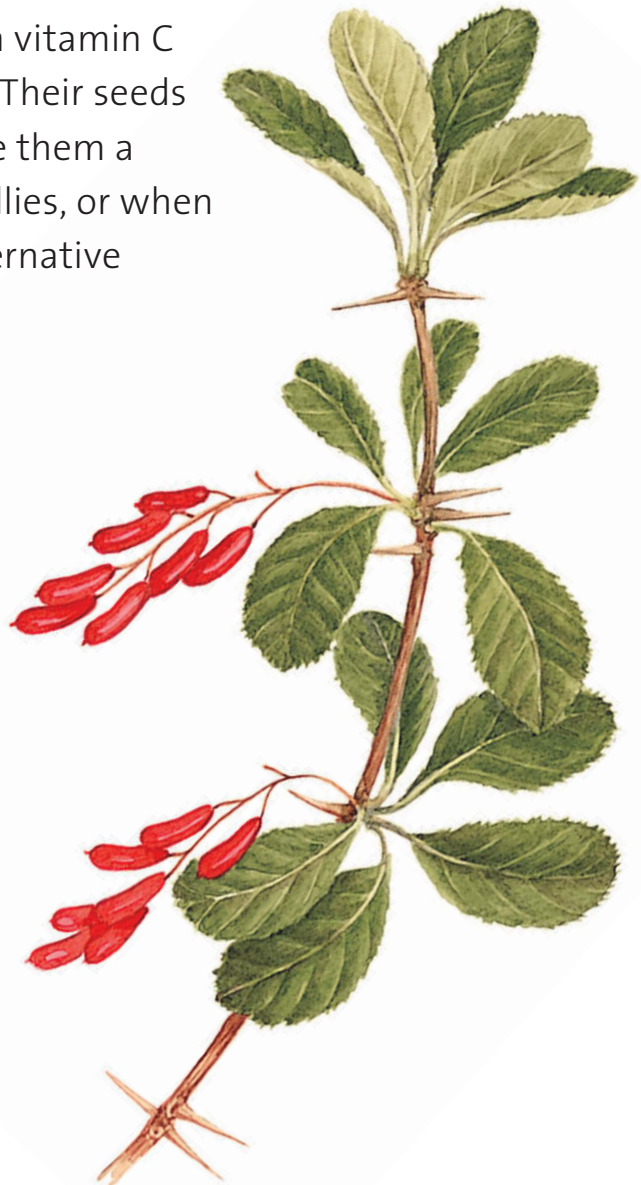


Barberry
Berberis vulgaris

Description A small shrub, reaching 2.5m tall, with oval-shaped leaves that cluster around yellowish twigs covered in three-pronged spikes. Flowers grow in small, yellow clusters and ripen into bright red, oval-shaped berries.

Distribution A naturalised garden escape in Britain. Common and widespread throughout most of Europe but rare in the Mediterranean.

Uses Barberry fruits are high in vitamin C with a pleasantly acidic taste. Their seeds are high in pectin, which make them a useful addition to jams and jellies, or when pressed they make a good alternative to lemon juice.



Hottentot Fig
Carpobrotus edulis

Description A naturalised plant, growing up to 20cm tall, with a woody stem and fleshy leaves, found on rocks, cliffs and sand dunes along coastlines. Flowers are yellow or purple and fruits ripen into small, cone-shaped capsules.

Distribution Native to South Africa but widely distributed on the coasts of southern Britain and western Europe.

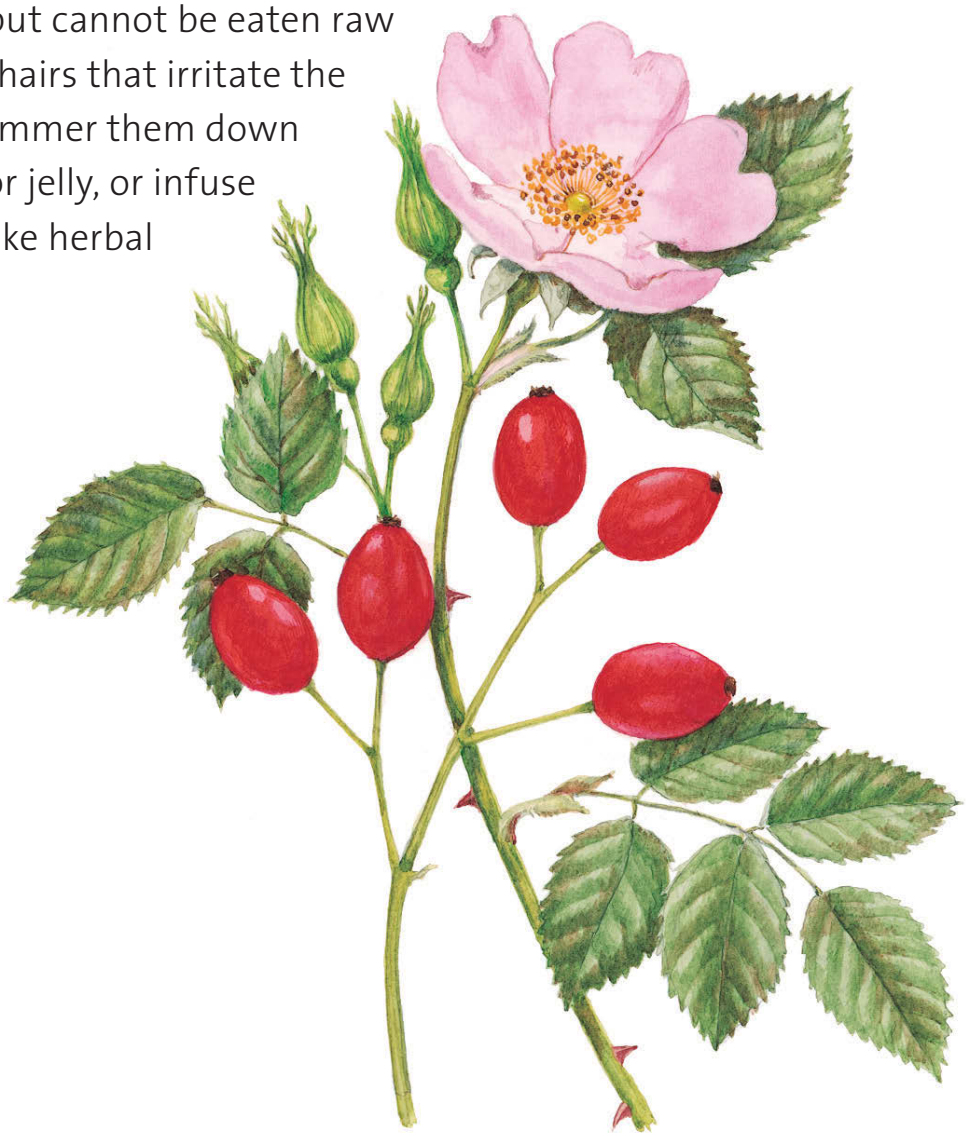
Uses These figgy fruits are juicy and a little sour, especially in cooler climates where temperatures are not high enough to allow them to fully ripen. They can be added to jams, chutneys and pickles, or stewed with sugar and spices to make a warm pudding.

Dog Rose
Rosa canina

Description A deciduous shrub, growing up to 5m tall, with green, arched stems covered with hooked thorns. Pinnate leaves and sweet-scented pink and white flowers that ripen into red or orange oval-shaped rosehip fruits.

Distribution Common throughout Britain and Europe except in the far north.

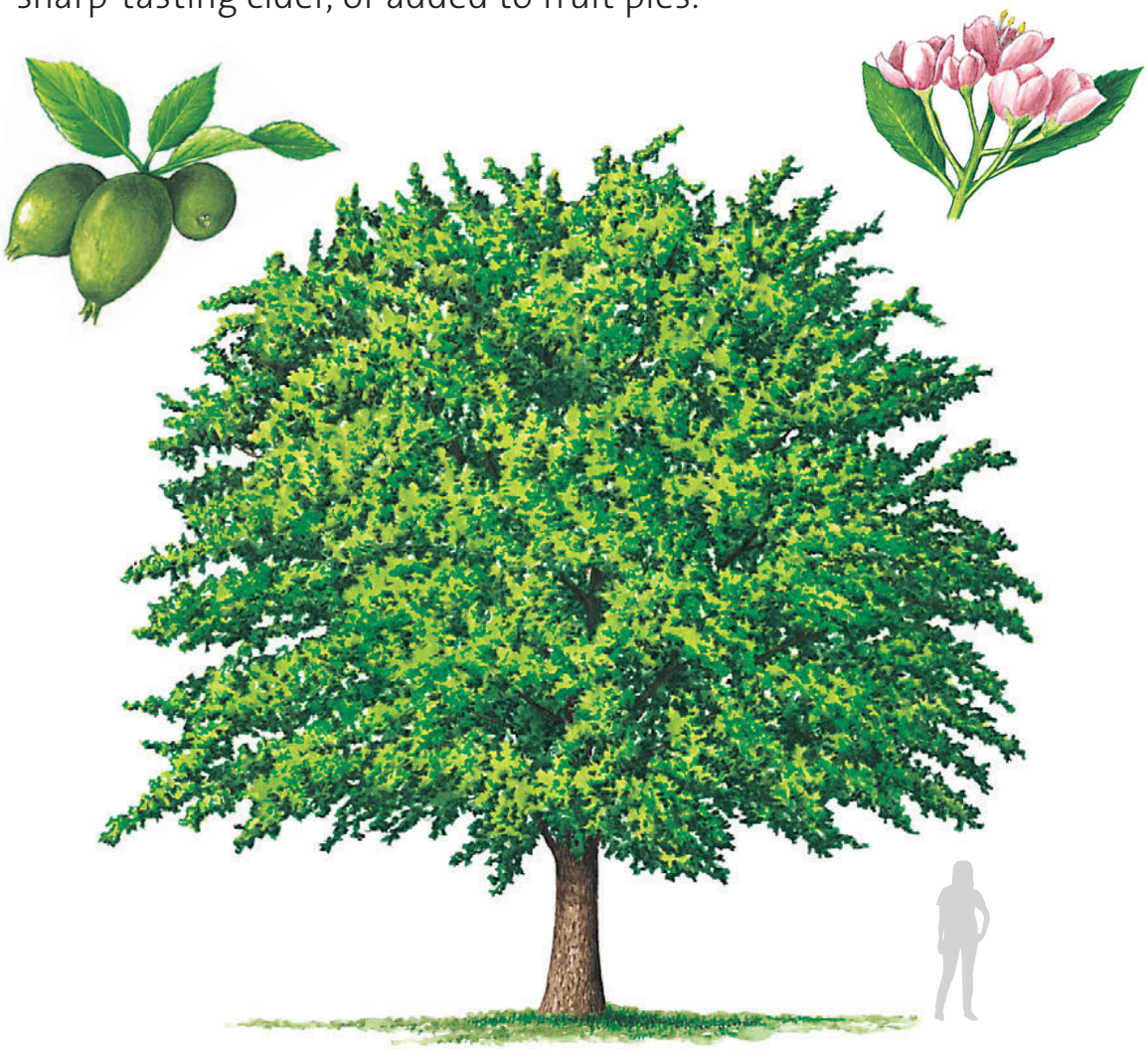
Uses If there are enough flowers available, the scented petals can be used to make jams, jellies and Turkish delight. Rosehips are high in vitamin C, but cannot be eaten raw due to fine hairs that irritate the stomach. Simmer them down into syrup or jelly, or infuse them to make herbal tea or wine.



Crab Apple

Malus sylvestris

Description A small, deciduous tree, reaching 10m tall, with a dense crown and large, twisted branches. Leaves are oval-shaped and serrated. Flowers are 3–4cm wide with five pinkish-white petals, appearing in clusters. Fruits are small, yellowish-green apples.
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.
Uses The apples are too sour to eat raw, but when cooked they make an excellent addition to jams and jellies as they are naturally high in pectin. Crab apple jelly is particularly good with sweet-flavoured breads and cheeseboards. The apples can also be used to make a sharp-tasting cider, or added to fruit pies.

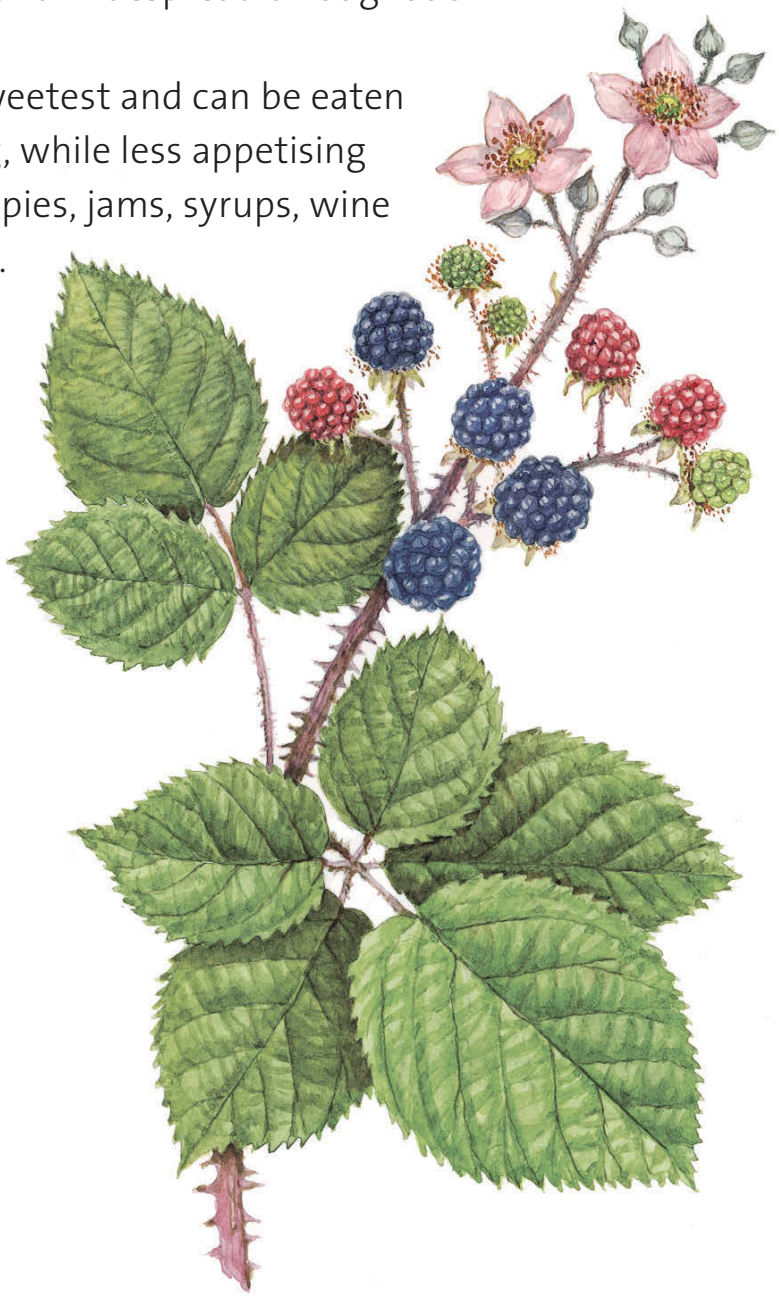


Blackberry
Rubus fruticosus

Description A deciduous shrub, reaching 1.5m tall, with prickly, often arching stems that root where they touch the ground. Leaves are pinnate and flowers grow up to 2cm wide with five white or pink petals. Fruits are green at first, before turning red and then black.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Early fruits are sweetest and can be eaten straight from the twig, while less appetising berries can be used in pies, jams, syrups, wine and infused in vinegar. They are excellent combined with pears, apples or plums in hot crumble, or use them as a flavouring for homemade mead with honey, water and spices.



Dewberry

Rubus caesius

Description A small, perennial plant with scrambling stems, growing up to 80cm tall. Leaves are divided into three double-toothed leaflets and flowers have five white petals. Fruits are bluish with a waxy bloom, similar to the glossier blackberry but composed of fewer segments.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout southern Britain and central and southern Europe.

Uses Dewberries are juicier and more flavoursome than blackberries and are best eaten raw, although they are usually less abundant. They can be used in similar ways, such as pies, puddings, jams, syrups and wine.

Bilberry

Vaccinium myrtillus

Description A small shrub, reaching 60cm tall, with bright green oval-shaped leaves and greenish-pink flowers. Fruits look much like the American blueberry, blue-black in colour with a whitish bloom that looks a little like yeast but is, in fact, a waxy secretion.

Distribution Common in western and northern Britain and in Europe, although only on mountains in the south.

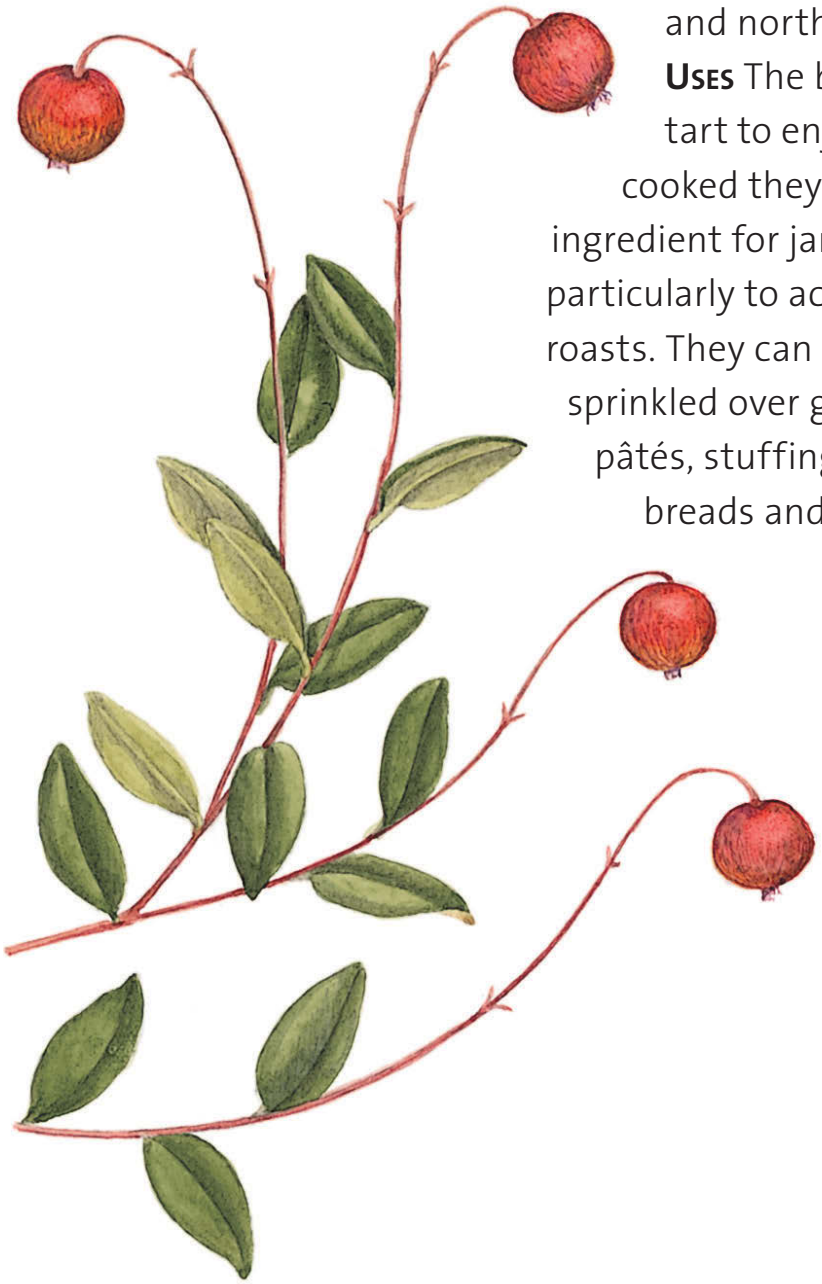
Uses Bilberries are delicious raw, though slightly tarter than the blueberry, and make a good addition to porridge, yoghurt and fruit salad. They can also be simmered down into compote and drizzled over desserts, or stewed into summer pudding with raspberries, blackberries and redcurrants.

Cranberry

Vaccinium oxycoccos

Description A small, evergreen shrub, reaching 80cm tall, with spreading leaves up to 10mm long. Flowers are elongated, on long stems, and are pinkish-red, ripening into a crimson, bulbous berry up to 6mm wide.

Distribution Grows in acidic bogs; uncommon in Britain but more easily found in northern and central Europe, as far south as France and northern Italy.



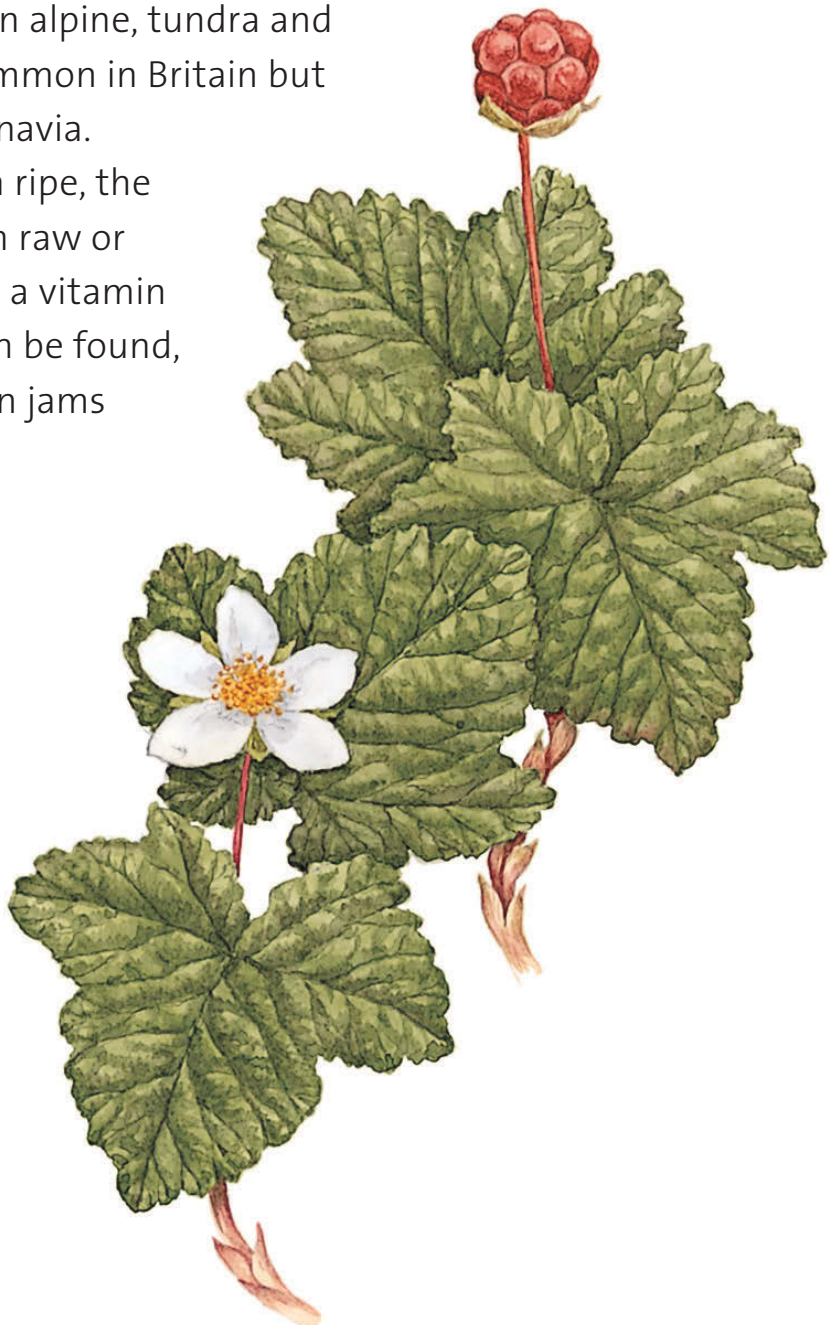
Uses The berries are a little too tart to enjoy raw, but when cooked they make an excellent ingredient for jams and jellies, particularly to accompany winter roasts. They can also be chopped and sprinkled over granola or added to pâtés, stuffings, sweet-flavoured breads and cakes.

Cloudberry
Rubus chamaemorus

Description A small, perennial plant with creeping, thornless stems, growing up to 20cm tall. Leaves are wrinkled with rounded, toothed lobes, and male and female flowers are found on different plants. Flowers have five white petals that (in the case of female flowers) ripen into large fruits, similar to raspberries but with more orange.

Distribution Grows in alpine, tundra and boreal forest; uncommon in Britain but abundant in Scandinavia.

Uses Excellent when ripe, the berries can be eaten raw or added to cereals for a vitamin boost. If enough can be found, they are also good in jams and pies.



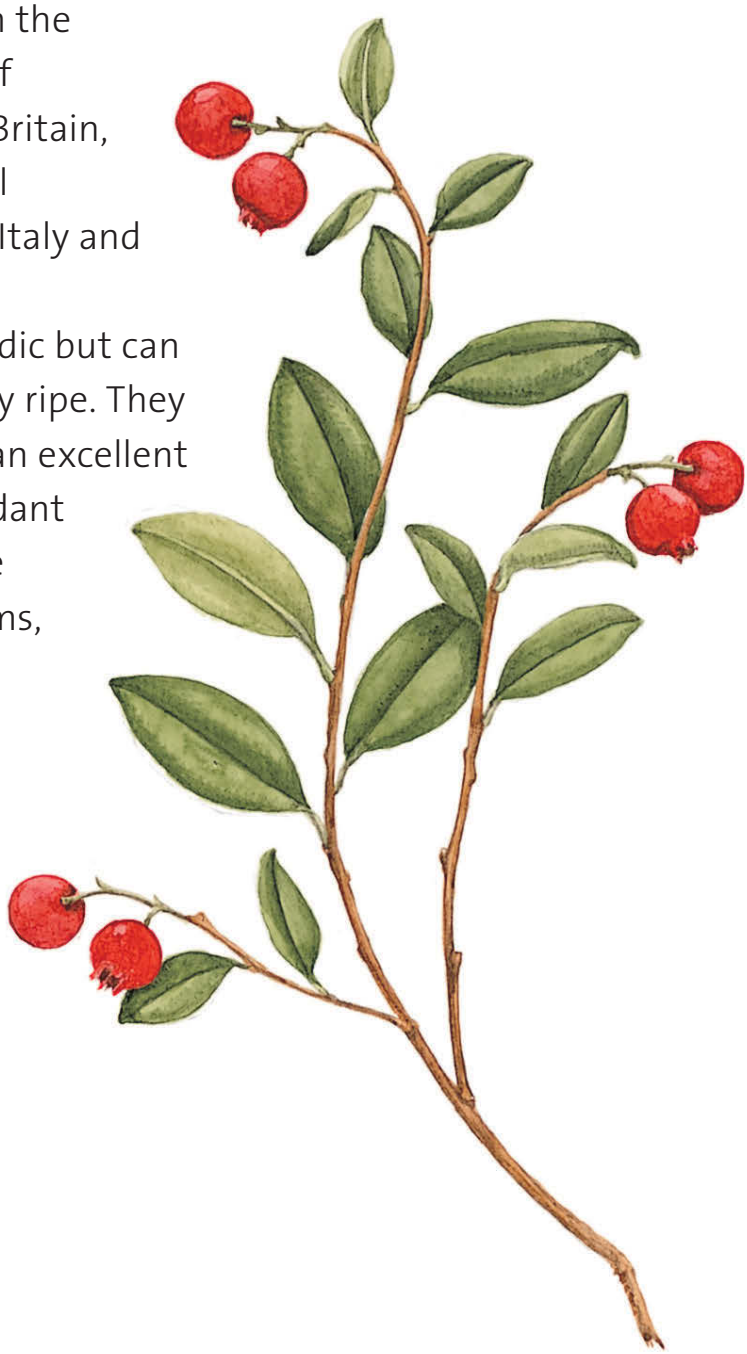
Cowberry

Vaccinium vitis-idaea

Description Also known as the lingonberry, this is a small, evergreen shrub, growing up to 30cm tall, with oval-shaped, leathery, dark green leaves. The flower is a white or pink bell that ripens into a globose red berry around 5–10mm in diameter.

Distribution Common in the mountainous regions of northern and western Britain, Scandinavia and central Europe, as far south as Italy and east to Bulgaria.

Uses Cowberries are acidic but can be eaten raw when fully ripe. They are best used to make an excellent jelly. Popular and abundant in Scandinavia, they are commonly added to jams, pies and fruit stews.



Crowberry
Empetrum nigrum

Description A small, evergreen, creeping shrub, reaching 20cm tall, with narrow pointed leaves up to 5mm long. Flowers are very small with six pink petals each, and the fruit is a globose black berry up to 8mm in diameter, similar to a blackcurrant.

Distribution Common in acidic bogs and moorland in northern England, Wales, Scotland, Scandinavia and the mountains of central Europe.

Uses Although they can be eaten raw, the berries are best mixed with other berries to improve their flavour in pies, crumbles, puddings, strudels and fruit stews. In traditional Alaskan culture, they are used in akutaq, an ice cream-like dish made of whipped fat, fruit, fish, tundra greens and roots.

Wild Strawberry

Fragaria vesca

Description A perennial plant, growing up to 30cm tall, with long, creeping stems and trefoil, toothed leaves. Flowers have five white petals arranged in a loose cluster, and fruits are bright red, similar to the domesticated strawberry but smaller and rounder.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Although smaller than the domesticated variety, their flavour is more intense. They do not grow in large volumes, however, so are best either eaten raw from the plant or combined with other fruits in crumbles, cakes, ice cream, vinegar, jelly or jam. They can also be added to sparkling wine or steeped in vodka with a little sugar.

Blackcurrant

Ribes nigrum

Description A bushy, deciduous shrub, growing up to 2.5m tall and 2m wide. Leaves have three to five lobes and produce a strong, aromatic smell when rubbed. Flowers have small, white petals that are overlapped by green sepals. Fruits are globose black berries with a 'tail' of old, brown sepals.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe, although often found as a naturalised garden escape.

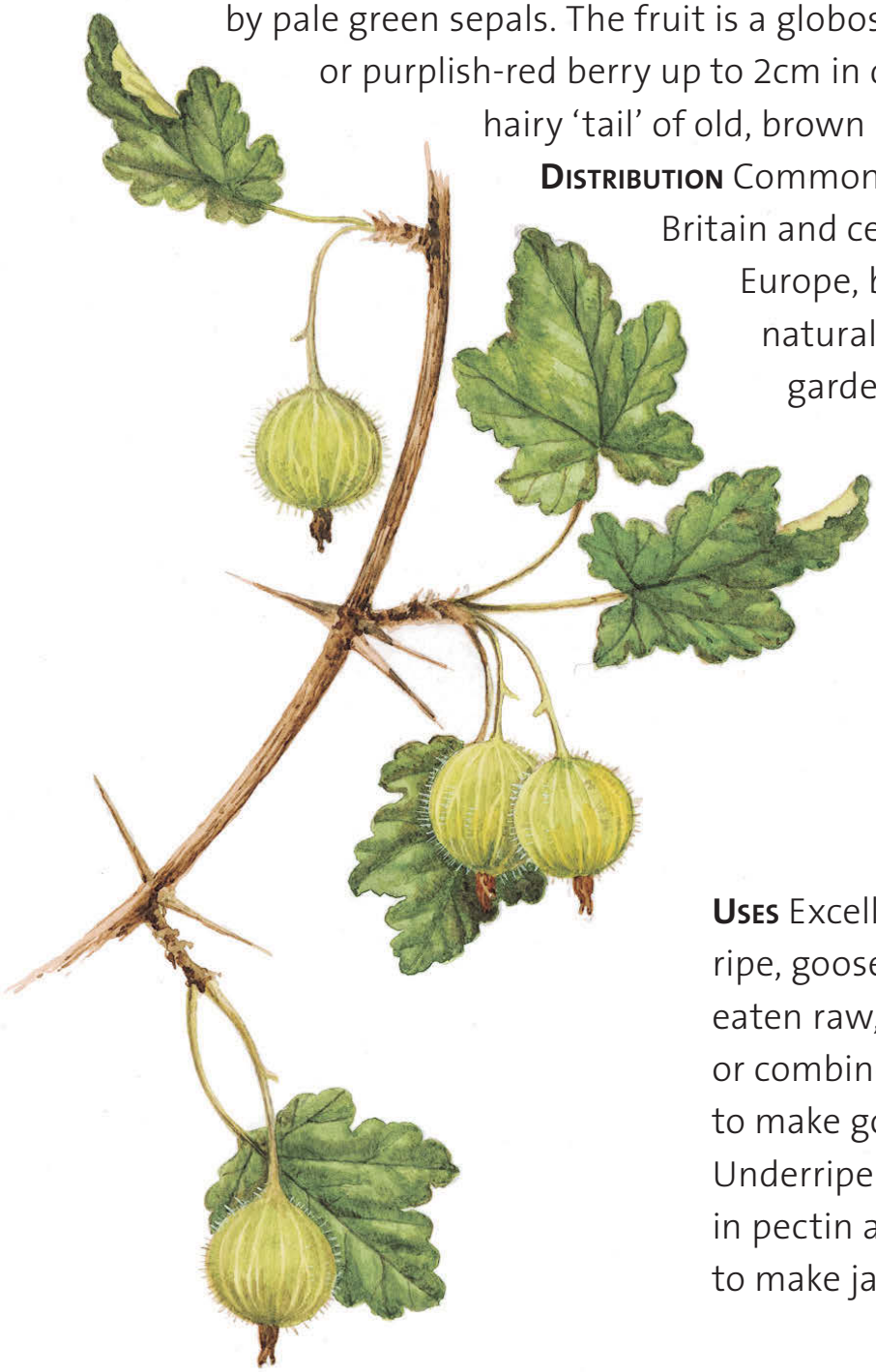
Uses High in vitamin C, blackcurrants are excellent raw or sprinkled over cereals. They make tasty jams, jellies and cordials, as well as combining well with other fruits in pies, puddings and other desserts.

Gooseberry

Ribes uva-crispa

Description A small, deciduous shrub, reaching 1.5m tall, with stout spines on the stems and twigs. Leaves are palmate with three to five lobes and a toothed edge. Flowers have five white petals overlapped by pale green sepals. The fruit is a globose, greenish-yellow or purplish-red berry up to 2cm in diameter, with a hairy 'tail' of old, brown sepals.

Distribution Common throughout Britain and central and southern Europe, but widely naturalised elsewhere as a garden escape.

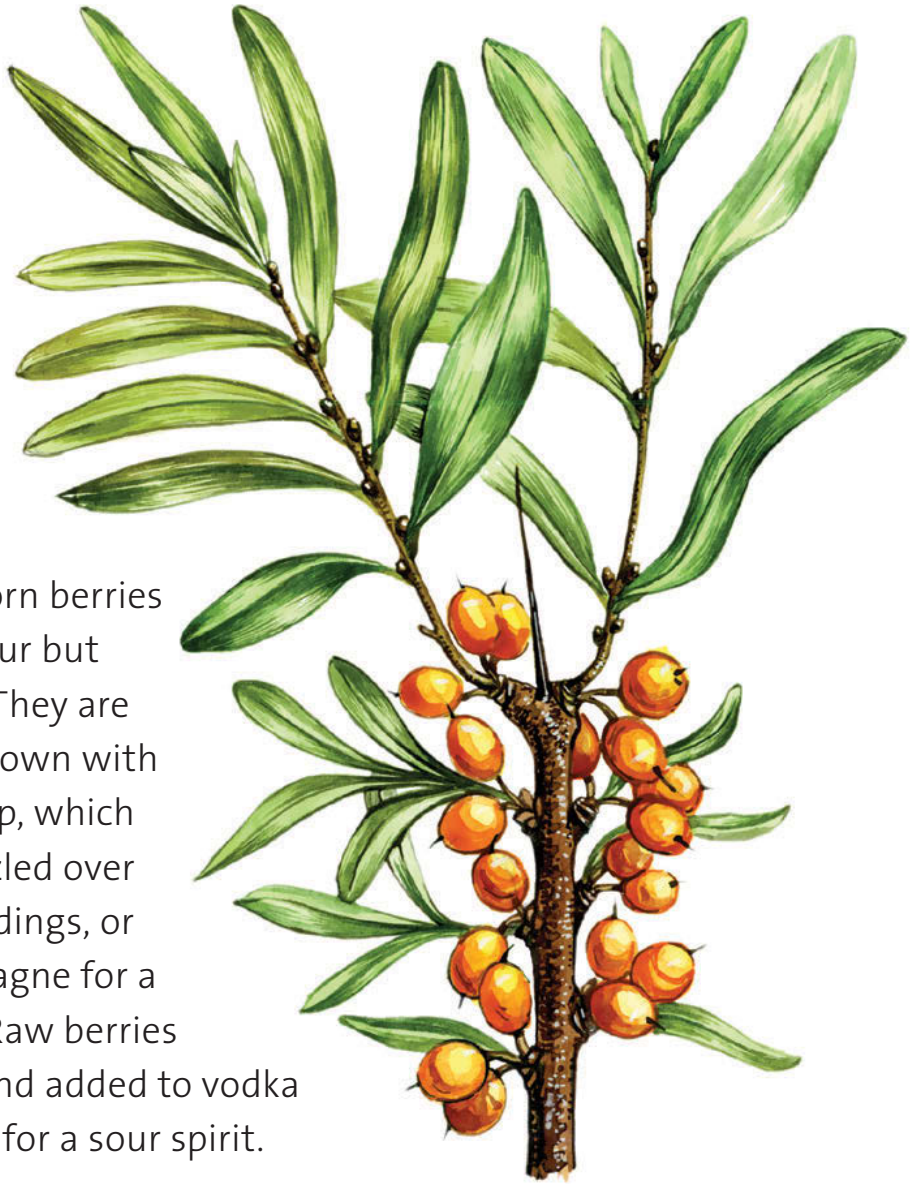


Uses Excellent when fully ripe, gooseberries can be eaten raw, added to pies or combined with yoghurt to make gooseberry fools. Underripe berries are high in pectin and can be used to make jams and jellies.

Sea Buckthorn

Hippophae rhamnoides

Description A large, deciduous shrub, reaching 4m tall, with long, narrow, greyish leaves and small, green flowers. Fruits are globose, bright orange berries, but beware of sharp thorns along the stems.
Distribution Uncommon on the east and south coasts of England, and in Scotland, Northern Ireland and northern Europe.



Uses Sea buckthorn berries are extremely sour but full of vitamins. They are best simmered down with sugar into a syrup, which can then be drizzled over granola and puddings, or added to champagne for a winter cocktail. Raw berries can also be slit and added to vodka with wild thyme for a sour spirit.

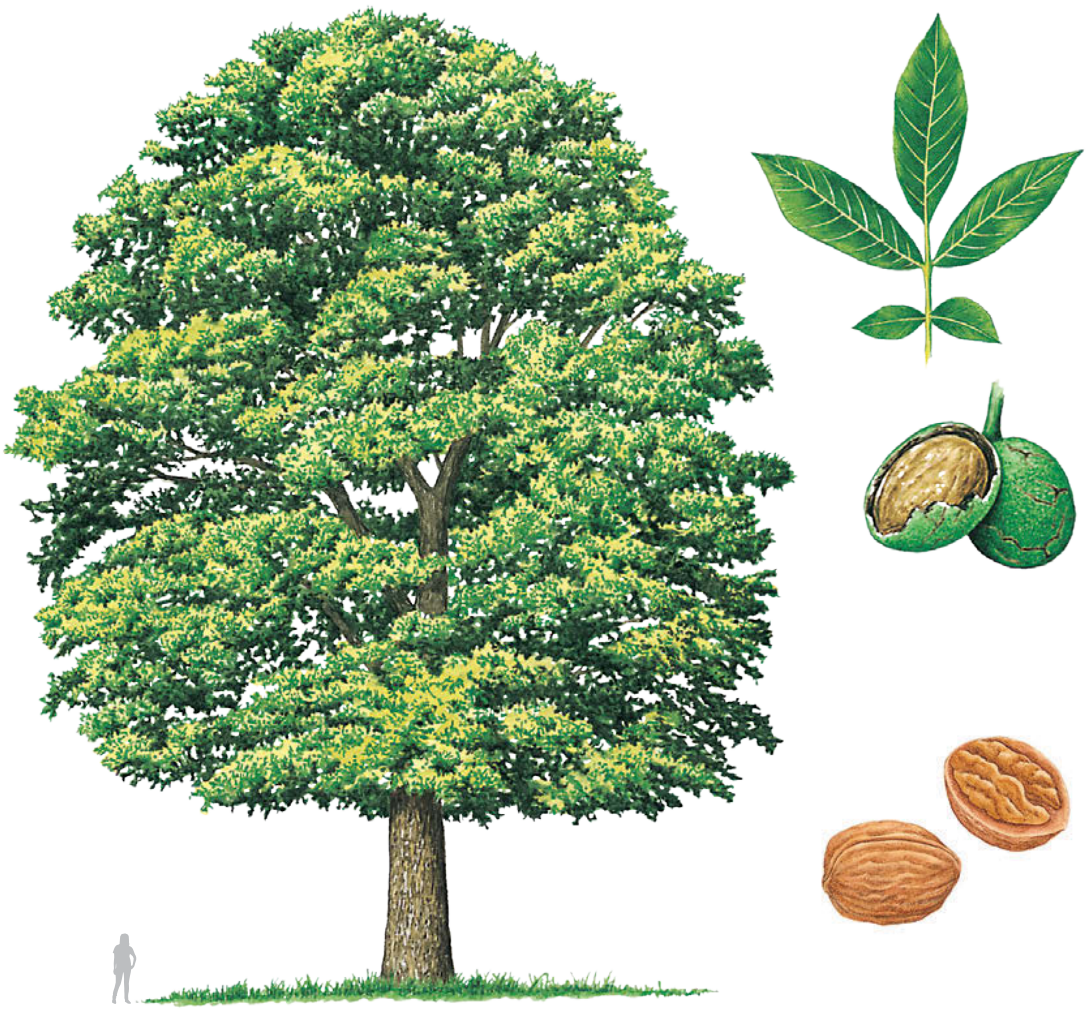
Walnut

Juglans regia

Description A large, deciduous tree, reaching 30m tall and 20m wide. Bark is smooth and grey with pinnate oval leaflets. Male flowers take the form of dark yellow catkins, while the walnut itself is hidden inside a shiny green capsule.

Distribution Native to the Balkans, the walnut has become common and naturalised throughout central and southern Europe. Fairly common in southern England.

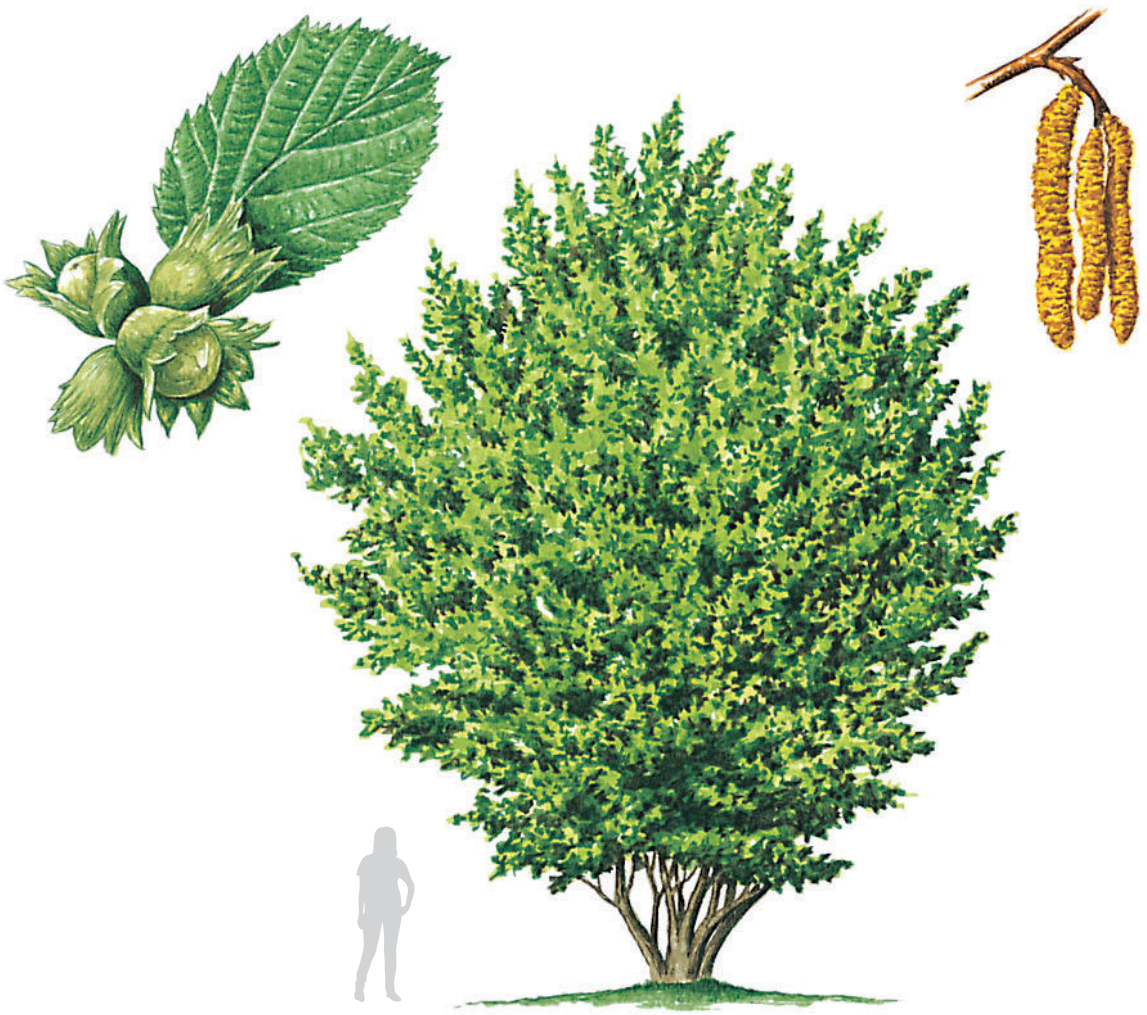
Uses Nuts are best harvested when mature and hardened. They make a healthy snack when eaten raw, or use them in coffee cake, bread, stilton tarts or granola, or to decorate cheeseboards.



Hazel

Corylus avellana

Description A small, deciduous tree, reaching 12m tall, with shiny, greyish-brown bark. Yellow catkins appear before new spring leaves, which are serrated and heart-shaped. Female flowers are spike-like buds. Nuts grow up to 2cm long, and are initially whitish-green before ripening to pinkish-brown, encased in a crown-like husk.
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.
Uses Delicious raw, hazelnuts are also excellent when roasted. They make a tasty addition to granola, salads, sweet-flavoured breads and fruit cake. They also pair well with chocolate-based recipes, such as brownies and cheesecakes.



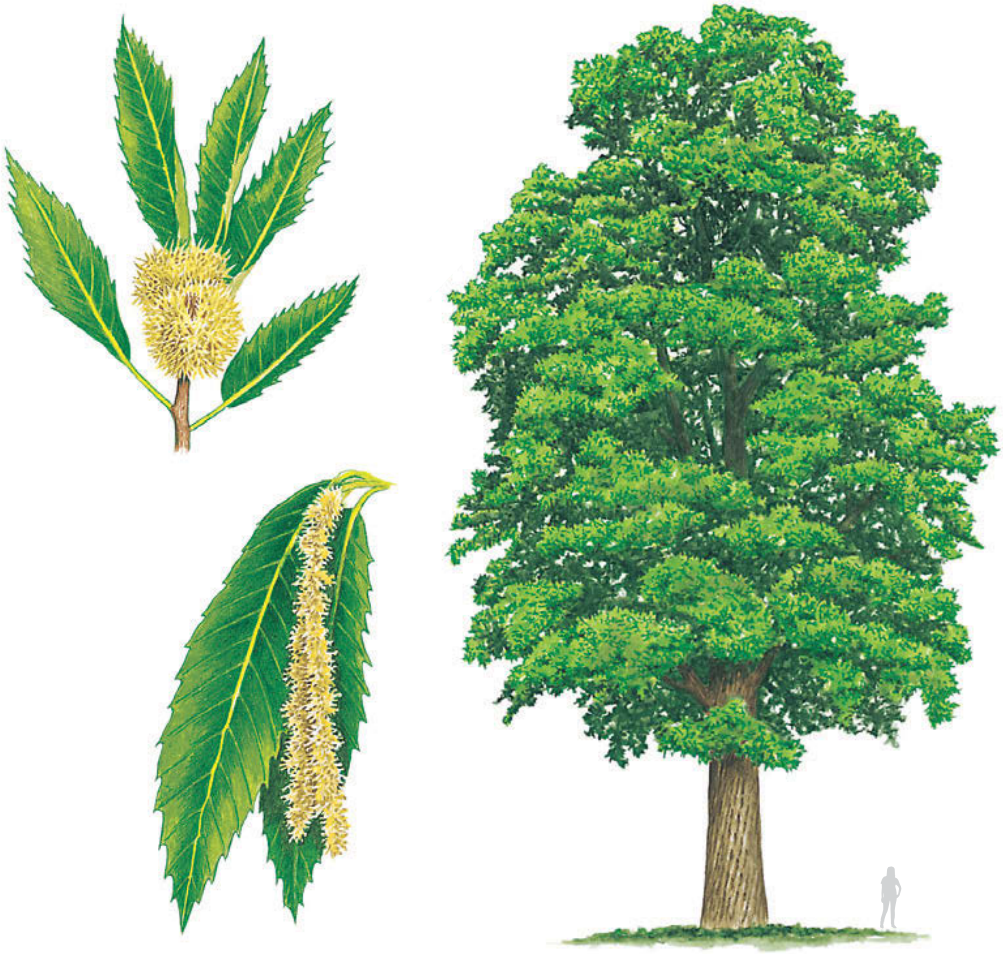
Sweet Chestnut

Castanea sativa

Description A large, deciduous tree, up to 30m tall, whose crown spreads with age. The trunk can reach 3m in diameter with purplish-grey bark. The leaves are pointed and sharply toothed. Flowers appear as yellowish catkins. Chestnut fruits are shiny and dark reddish-brown, enclosed in a prickly green case.

Distribution Native to the Mediterranean region but common and widespread throughout Britain and central and southern Europe.

Uses Chestnuts can be eaten raw, although they will taste dry due to their tannins. For best results, roast or boil and eat with Brussels sprouts, or purée into soups, stews and stuffing. Purée can also be frozen for later use.



Pedunculate Oak

Quercus robur

Description A large, deciduous tree, reaching 40m tall, with fissured grey-green bark. As it ages, trunk becomes hollow and crown widens. Leaves are long with four to five rounded lobes on each side. Male flowers appear as brownish-yellow catkins and female flowers are globular and pale brown. Fruits are acorns up to 4cm long, half-enclosed in a scaly cup.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Acorns are bitter due to their high tannin content, so try burying them in the soil over winter to improve flavour. They can also be roasted and ground to make a coffee alternative, or infuse the leaves in rum for a tasty spirit.

Common Poppy

Papaver rhoeas

Description A delicate annual plant, reaching 90cm tall, with leaves divided into toothed segments. Flowers have two sepals that drop off as the petals open. Each flower has four red petals forming a disc up to 10cm in diameter, ripening into a globular, hairless fruit, known as a 'pepper pot' as it can be tipped upside down to disperse its blue-black seeds.

Distribution Common throughout Britain and most of Europe, although rare in the north.

Uses Shake ripened capsules into a bag to remove seeds, which are edible and do not contain the narcotic opiates of the opium poppy. Use in cakes, muffins and biscuits, or sprinkle over bread and pastries.

Hop
Humulus lupulus

Description A perennial vine-like plant that climbs up to 6m tall along hedgerows, supporting itself by twisting around other plants. Leaves are large with three to five lobes and male flowers are 4–5mm wide. Female flowers form a yellowish-green cone shape with overlapping bracts.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout England, Wales and central and southern Europe.

Uses Unfertilised female flowers can be gathered and dried to make beer, just like their cultivated cousins. Hops add a citrusy bitterness to beer and dried flowers can be kept for many months before use. Alternatively, young flowers can be gathered in spring and steamed with asparagus and a little butter.

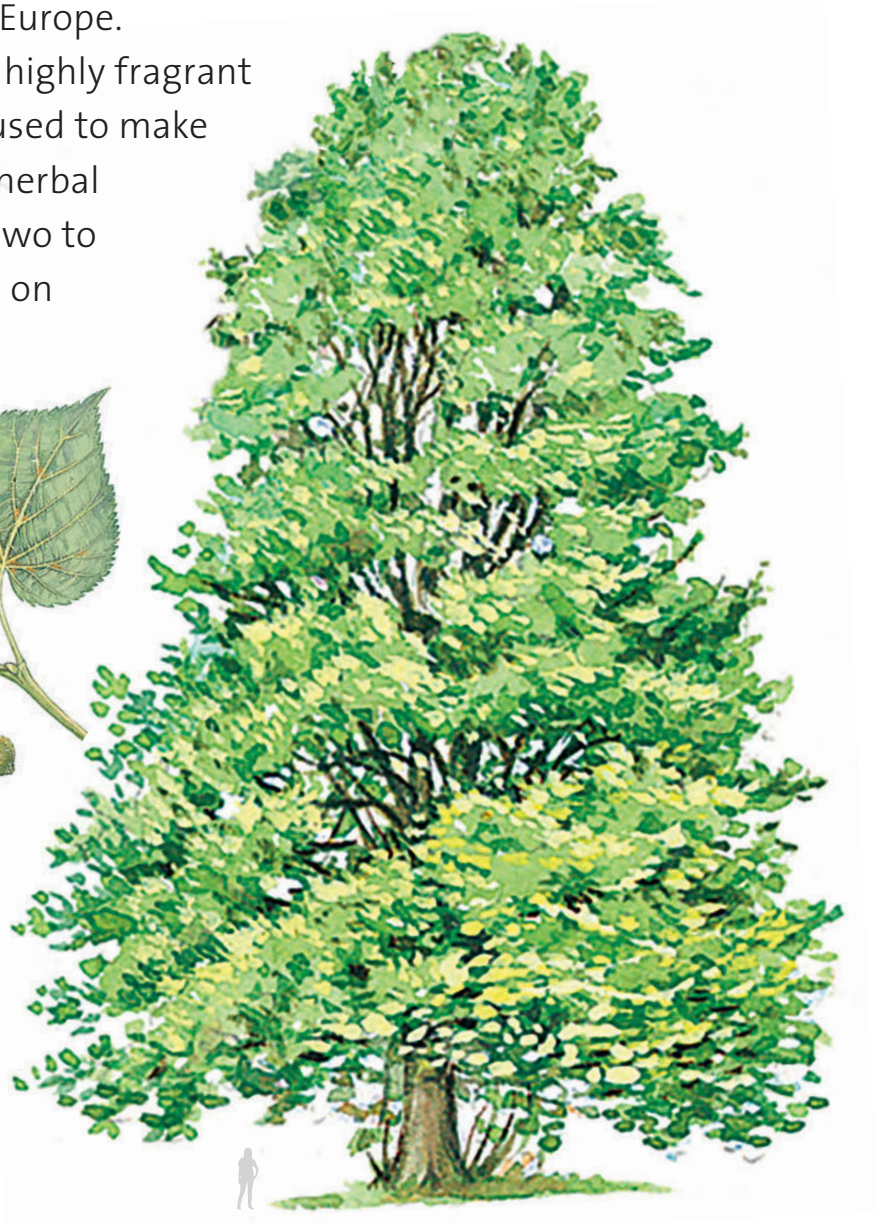
Common Lime

Tilia x vulgaris

Description A tall, deciduous tree, reaching up to 45m tall and 15m wide. Bark is smooth and greyish-brown, and leaves are broad and oval-shaped with toothed edges, often shiny and sticky with honeydew. Flowers are small and fragrant with five yellowish-white petals arranged in a cluster. Fruit is an oval-shaped nut.

Distribution Abundant throughout Britain and central and southern Europe.

Uses Lime flowers are highly fragrant and are traditionally used to make linden tea, a calming herbal remedy. Infuse after two to three weeks of drying on a flat surface.



Meadowsweet

Filipendula ulmaria

Description A perennial plant, reaching 2m tall, with leafy stems and large, oval-shaped, toothed leaves. Flowers are small and heavily scented, with five or six creamy white petals and arranged in dense clusters. Fruits are very small and twisted together.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe except the Mediterranean.

Uses Meadowsweet was historically brought into the home to add fragrance, but it is also delicious in cooking with a light, almond-like flavour. Flowers and leaves can be used dry or fresh to flavour wines, spirits, vinegar and mead, or they can be combined with elderflowers to make syrup. Flowers can also be added to stewed fruit in summer puddings.

Sweet Violet

Viola odorata

Description A perennial plant, reaching 15cm tall, with toothed, kidney-shaped leaves growing up to 6cm long. Flowers are solitary and fragrant, growing on long stems with dark violet or white petals. Lower petals are overlapped by the sepals.

Distribution A woodland flower, common in Europe and southern Britain but rare in Scotland and Ireland.

Uses In Britain, sweet violets are classed as stable in conservation terms but should only be picked if large numbers can be found. The flowers can be simmered down into a syrup to mix with prosecco or cocktails, or scatter them fresh over fruit salads, ice cream and other light puddings. They can also be crystallised and used to decorate cakes. Simply coat each flower with egg white and sprinkle with icing sugar before leaving to dry.

Heather

Calluna vulgaris

Description A small, evergreen shrub, reaching 60cm tall, with scale-like, arrow-shaped leaves densely arranged in four rows. Flowers have four pinkish-purple petal-like sepals and a four-lobed corolla. Fruit is a seeded capsule that splits lengthwise.

Distribution Common throughout Britain and Europe, except the Mediterranean.

Uses Flowers are sweet and can be dried and used as an alternative to hops in homebrewing to make ales and wines. They can also be dried and infused with blackberry leaves and thyme to make a herbal tea for late summer.

Gorse

Ulex europaeus

Description A large, evergreen shrub, reaching 4.5m tall, with spiny branches and trifoliate leaves. Leaves are needle-like and flowers are bright yellow, with a distinctive coconut fragrance during the spring and summer.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and western Europe.

Uses Young petals have a fragrant aroma and are worth harvesting if you have the patience. Once enough petals have been gathered, use them to make a light panna cotta, swirl them into sweet cakes or infuse them with a little chilli in home-brewed mead.

Common Nettle

Urtica dioica

Description A coarse perennial, growing up to 1.2m tall, covered with stinging hairs, often found growing in large, unruly patches. Stems are long and creeping with toothed, heart-shaped leaves. Flowers have four small, green petals arranged in loose spikes.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Young leaves and shoots can be cooked like spinach, added to omelettes and frittatas, sautéed in butter with garlic, or added to hot soups, sauces, stews and curries. Nettles also make an excellent home-brewed beer with a clear, russet colour.

White Dead-nettle

Lamium album

Description A hairy, aromatic perennial plant, growing up to 70cm tall, with creeping stems, this species looks similar to the common nettle but without its stinging leaves. Leaves are toothed and pointed, and flowers are white or cream with a hooded upper lip.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe but rare in southern Europe.

Uses Young leaves and shoots can be cooked like spinach, added to omelettes and frittatas, sautéed in butter with garlic, or added to hot soups, sauces, stews and curries.

Red Dead-nettle

Lamium purpureum

Description A soft, hairy annual plant, growing up to 40cm tall, with purple-tinged stems and heart-shaped leaves. Flowers are pinkish-purple, often hidden beneath the larger leaves.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe, except in the far north.

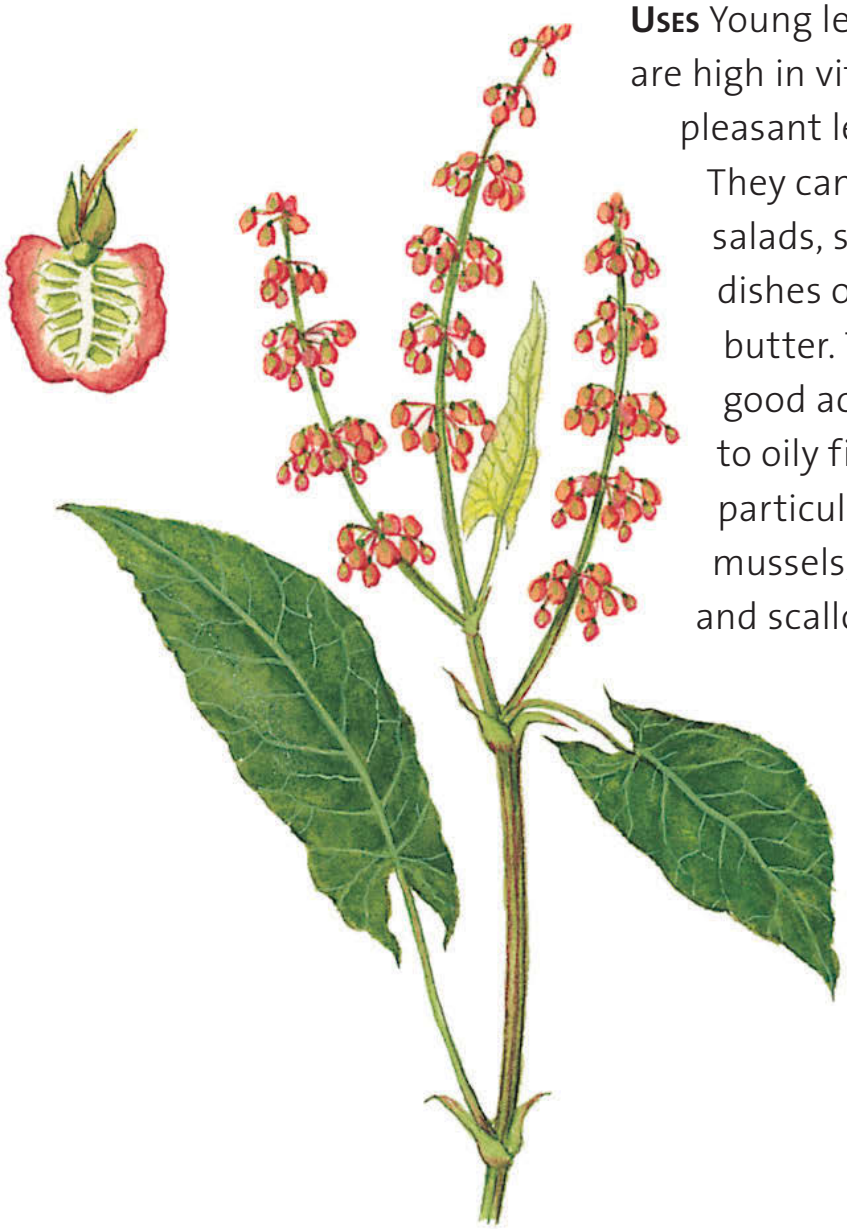
Uses Young leaves and shoots can be cooked like spinach, added to omelettes and frittatas, sautéed in butter with garlic, or added to hot soups, sauces, stews and curries. Flowers can also be crystallised using egg white and sugar.

Sorrel

Rumex acetosa

Description A perennial plant, growing up to 60cm tall. Leaves are arrow-shaped with backward-pointing lobes. Male and female flowers, found on different plants, are peachy-pink and arranged in clusters on a spike.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe, except in the south.



Uses Young leaves and shoots are high in vitamin C with a pleasant lemon flavour. They can be added to salads, soups, vegetable dishes or sautéed with butter. They are also a good accompaniment to oily fish and shellfish, particularly mackerel, mussels, herrings, salmon and scallops.

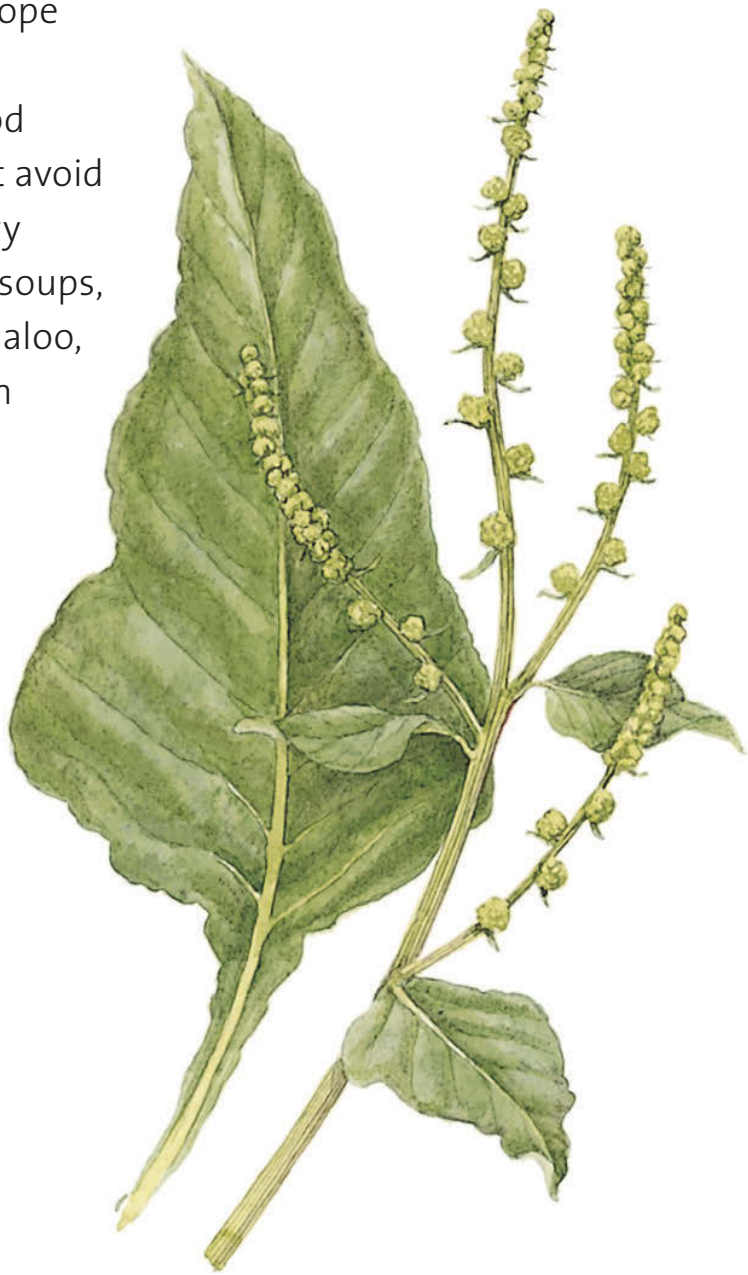
Sea Beet

Beta vulgaris subsp. maritima

Description An annual, biennial or perennial plant, growing up to 80cm tall, found along coasts and saltmarshes. Leaves are shiny green, wedge-shaped and pointed, with small, greenish flowers arranged in clusters on a branched spike.

Distribution Common in southern Britain, Ireland and southern and western Europe but rarer further north.

Uses Sea beet makes a good substitute for spinach, but avoid eating the tough stems. Try adding chopped leaves to soups, pasta dishes, quiche, saag aloo, baked eggs or frittata with fresh ricotta.



Good King Henry

Chenopodium bonus-henricus

Description A tall, perennial plant, growing up to 60cm tall. Leaves are triangular with wavy margins and a powdery surface that later turns dull green. Flowers are small and greenish, growing on a spike.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe, except in south-east Europe.

Uses Leaves can be eaten raw in salads or cooked in the same way as spinach. Young shoots are sweeter and can be steamed like asparagus. The clustered flower buds can be sautéed with butter, garlic and a little nutmeg.

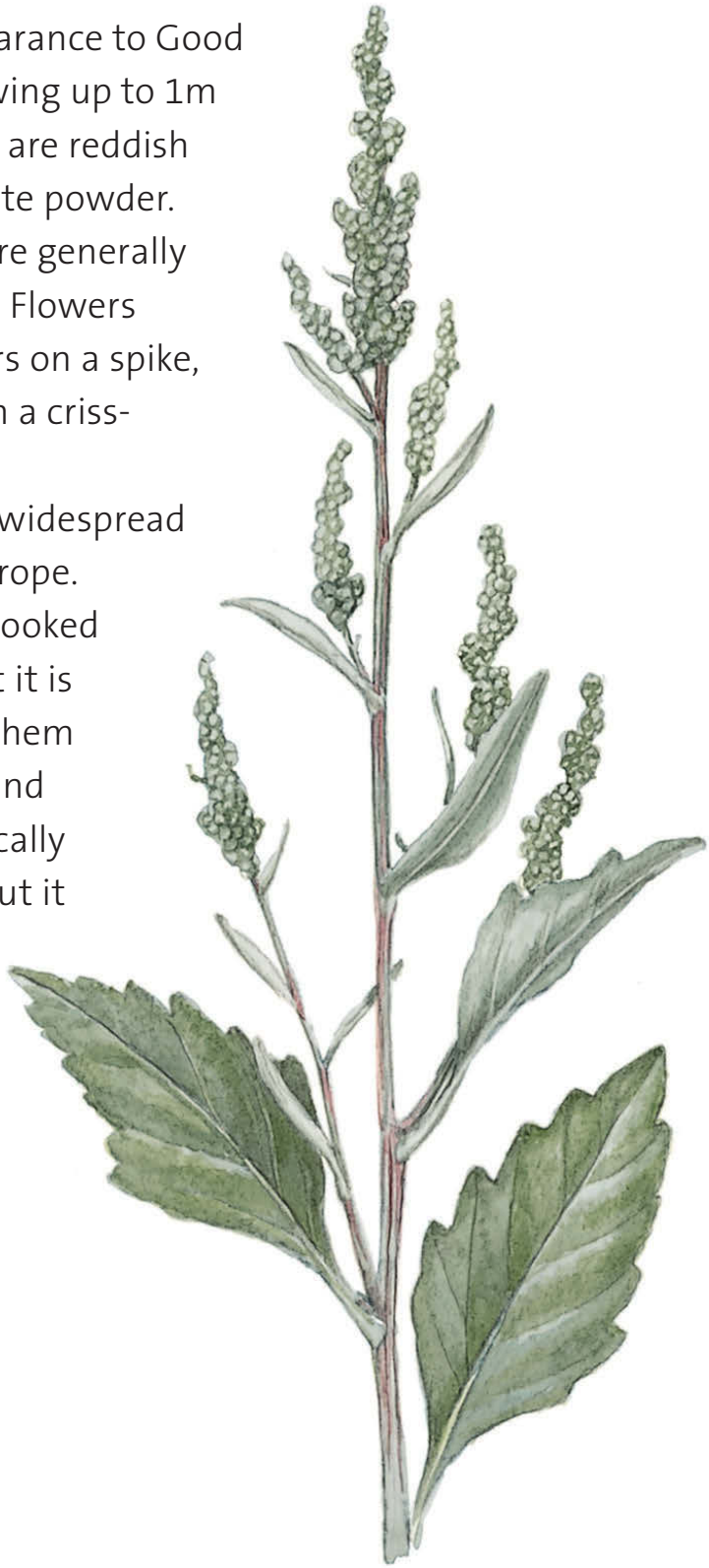
Fat Hen

Chenopodium album

Description Similar in appearance to Good King Henry but taller, growing up to 1m tall and 50cm wide. Stems are reddish and usually covered in white powder. Leaves vary in shape but are generally oval, pointed and toothed. Flowers grow in small, tight clusters on a spike, and seeds are marked with a criss-crossed pattern.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Young leaves can be cooked and eaten like spinach, but it is not recommended to eat them raw. Add to soups, stews and curries. Seeds have historically been used to make flour but it is a time-consuming process.



Common Orache

Atriplex patula

Description An annual plant with ridged, minty-white stems, reaching 1m tall. Leaves are pointed and triangular with toothed margins and a powdery surface. Flowers are borne in clusters on long spikes.

Distribution Common and widespread in southern Britain and central and southern Europe.

Uses Young leaves and shoots can be used in place of spinach, but they are bland in taste and combine better with spinach, chard or sorrel. Try sautéing to accompany grilled monkfish, with a little feta.

Sea Purslane

Halimione portulacoides

Description A sprawling perennial plant, reaching 1m tall, that grows around pools, saltmarshes and creek edges. Leaves are oval-shaped, thick and fleshy, and covered in a powdery substance. Flowers are small and arranged in short clusters.

Distribution Common around the coasts of southern Britain, the Mediterranean and the south-west shore of the Black Sea.

Uses The leaves have a crunchy, salty taste and can be rinsed and eaten raw. Alternatively, stir-fry them with cashews or serve with any fish-based dish.

Pigweed

Amaranthus retroflexus

Description An upright annual plant, growing up to 1m tall. Leaves are alternative, oval and pointed. Flowers are small and grow in dense clusters that form a short, hairy spike.

Distribution Native to North America, pigweed is now common and widespread throughout southern Britain and southern and central Europe.

Uses Leaves can be eaten raw in salad, cooked like spinach or added to soups, stews and curries. Seeds are edible and can be used in baking or ground into flour.

Marsh Samphire

Salicornia europaea

Description A fleshy annual plant, growing up to 40cm tall, with succulent leaves that fuse together to form seemingly leafless stems, similar to a cactus. Its colour changes from dark green to yellowish-green, before turning reddish when in fruit.

Distribution Common on the south and east coasts of England and most European coastlines.

Uses If not locally at risk of overpicking, the entire plant can be pulled up and rinsed, or use scissors to snip away the tops of the plant. Samphire can be eaten raw, or boil the stems before scooping out the soft flesh and serving warm with butter and fish.

Black Mustard

Brassica nigra

Description An erect, annual plant with slender stems, reaching up to 1m tall and 70cm wide. Lower leaves are deeply divided with a large terminal lobe. Flowers are small with four yellow petals, and fruits are small, beaked capsules.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Like garlic mustard, leaves can be used as a punchier alternative to spinach. Young leaves are particularly tasty in salads, soups and quiches. The seeds can be eaten for a strong mustard flavour. Try combining them with vinegar, white wine, salt and a little sugar for a sharp condiment.

Wild Cabbage

Brassica oleracea

Description A perennial plant, reaching 1.5m tall, with a woody stem and greyish-green leaves that grow long, thick and fleshy. Flowers have four yellow petals and grow in long clusters on spreading stalks.

Distribution Found on the coasts of Britain, France, Spain and Italy, but nowhere common.

Uses Slightly more bitter than domesticated cabbage, this species still makes a good addition to other hot vegetables. Boil young leaves and shoots before serving with spinach, asparagus or broccoli, along with a blob of butter.

Bladder Campion

Silene vulgaris

Description A perennial plant, reaching 60cm high, with tall, erect stems and oval-shaped leaves with wavy edges. Flowers grow up to 1.8cm in diameter with large white petals arranged in a loose spike. Underneath the flower, the calyx forms a globular tube.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Young leaves and shoots can be gathered before flowering and used raw in salads, cooked like spinach, or chopped and added to soups, stews and curries.

Garlic Mustard

Alliaria petiolata

Description A biennial plant, reaching 1.2m tall with an erect, unbranched stem. Leaves are heart-shaped with toothed or wavy edges, and flowers are small and white with four petals, borne on the stem tips in a loose spike.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses The entire plant has an aromatic flavour, but without the longevity of regular garlic. Historically it was used as a flavouring for salty fish, but it can also be combined with nettles and wild garlic to make a spring pesto. Alternatively, wrap leaves around pieces of a hard cheese such as Cornish yarg.

Winter Cress

Barbarea vulgaris

Description A stout, perennial or biennial plant, reaching up to 80cm tall and 25cm wide. Lower leaves are pinnately lobed and upper leaves are small and oval-shaped with wavy edges. Flowers are yellow and borne in terminal clusters.

Distribution Common in hedgerows and woodland edges throughout Britain and Europe, except in the north.

Uses Once grown as an early salad vegetable, it has now been more commonly replaced by watercress, but winter cress will still provide a good peppery lift to salads and sandwiches. Flower shoots can also be steamed or stir-fried like broccoli.

Watercress

Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum

Description A perennial plant, reaching 60cm long with creeping, rooting stems, often found in ditches, brooks and streams. Leaves are dark green with rounded leaflets, with the terminal leaf being heart-shaped. Flowers are white and arranged in a loose cluster.

Distribution Common and widespread in rivers, ponds and ditches throughout Britain and Europe, except in the far north.

Uses Famed for its hot, peppery taste, watercress adds flavour to any salad, soup or sandwich, as well as being rich in iron and vitamin C. Blend with peas, mint and sour cream for an excellent sauce to accompany mackerel or scallops, or combine with pomegranate seeds, walnuts and balsamic glaze for a delicious salad.

Cuckooflower

Cardamine pratensis

Description A perennial plant, reaching 60cm tall, with erect stems and basal leaves arranged in a rosette. Flowers are up to 20mm in diameter with four pink or white petals arranged in terminal clusters. Fruit is a narrow pod growing up to 5cm long, containing the seeds.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses A good alternative to watercress, cuckooflower shares the same peppery taste and can be added to soups and sandwiches for extra flavour.

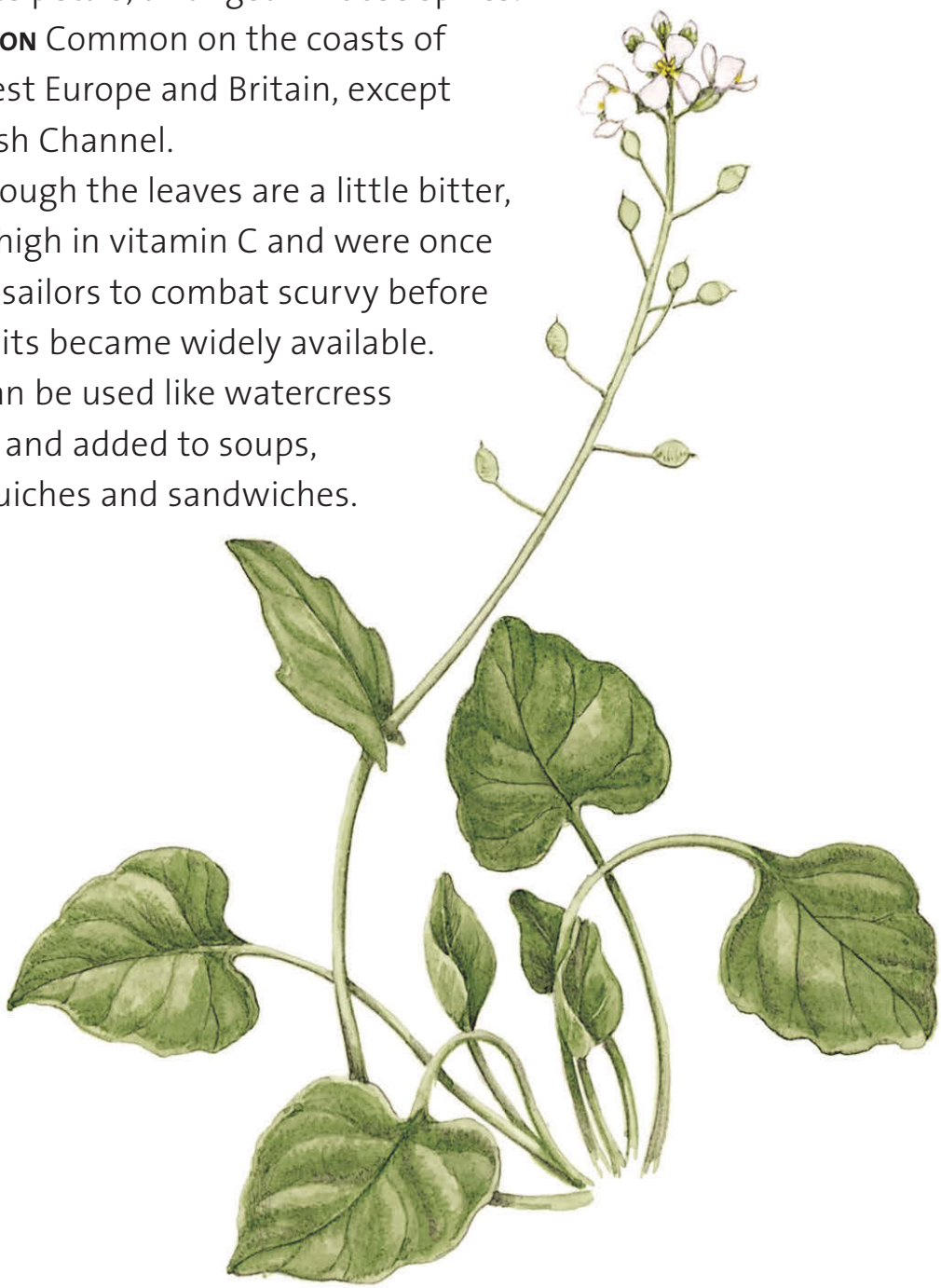
Common Scurvy-grass

Cochlearia officinalis

Description A biennial or perennial plant, reaching 30cm tall, with a long tap root and smooth, fleshy stems. Leaves are either heart-shaped or kidney-shaped with long stalks. Flowers are small with four white petals, arranged in loose spikes.

Distribution Common on the coasts of north-west Europe and Britain, except the English Channel.

Uses Although the leaves are a little bitter, they are high in vitamin C and were once eaten by sailors to combat scurvy before citrus fruits became widely available. Leaves can be used like watercress or rocket and added to soups, salads, quiches and sandwiches.



Parsley Piert
Aphanes arvensis

Description A small annual plant, growing up to 20cm tall and 20cm wide. Leaves are deeply lobed and divided into three segments, each with up to five lobes at the tip. Flowers are tiny and borne in dense clusters in a leafy cup on the stem.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses The leaves have a mild, acidic flavour and can be added to salads, quiches and sandwiches.

Wood Sorrel

Oxalis acetosella

Description A perennial plant growing up to 10cm tall with trifoliate leaves forming a loose rosette. Each leaflet is rounded and notched at the tip, and leaf clusters will often form a dense mat on the woodland floor. Flowers are solitary with five white petals and purple veins, borne on a thin stem.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Leaves have a pungent flavour and can be used to liven up salads, soups and sauces. Due to their high oxalic acid content, leaves should be used sparingly and infrequently.

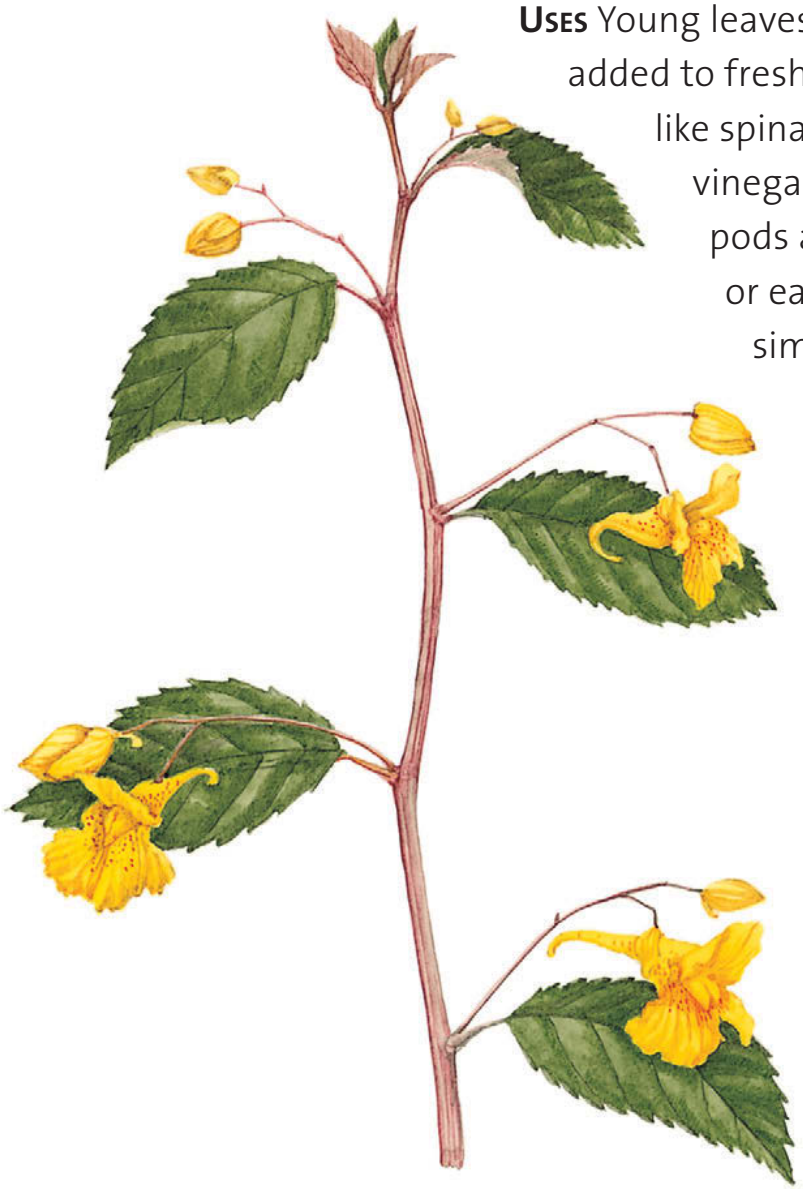
Jewel Weed

Impatiens capensis

Description A bushy, annual plant reaching 1.5m tall with fleshy stems and oval-shaped, pointed, pale green leaves. Flowers are 2–3cm long with five golden-orange petals, irregularly shaped and spotted with brown. Fruit is a dry capsule that bursts open to disperse seeds over a large area.

Distribution Native to North America but naturalised in ditches and streams in southern England and central and southern Europe.

Uses Young leaves and stems can be added to fresh salads or steamed like spinach with a little cider vinegar. Pre-explosion seed pods are good in stir-fries or eaten raw, with a taste similar to walnuts.



Common Mallow

Malva sylvestris

Description A perennial plant, reaching 1.5m tall, with a thick, hairy stem and rounded, toothed leaves covered in fine down. Flowers grow up to 4cm wide on the axils of the leaves, and have five mauve petals with purple lines converging at the centre.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe except in the far north.

Uses Young leaves and shoots are juicy and make a good addition to salads, soups and stews. The flowers are also perfect for crystallising due to their firm texture.

Rosebay Willowherb

Epilobium angustifolium

Description An upright, perennial plant, reaching 2m tall, with erect stems and long, alternate, pointed leaves. Flowers are 2–3cm in diameter with four unequal pink petals, arranged in a dense spike.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe, although rarer in southern Europe.

Uses Young shoots can be steamed with butter for an asparagus-like side dish. Leaves can be added to salads or cooked like spinach, while the roots can be dug up in late autumn to be roasted with parsnip, carrots and garlic cloves. The leaves can also be used to make a traditional Russian tea.

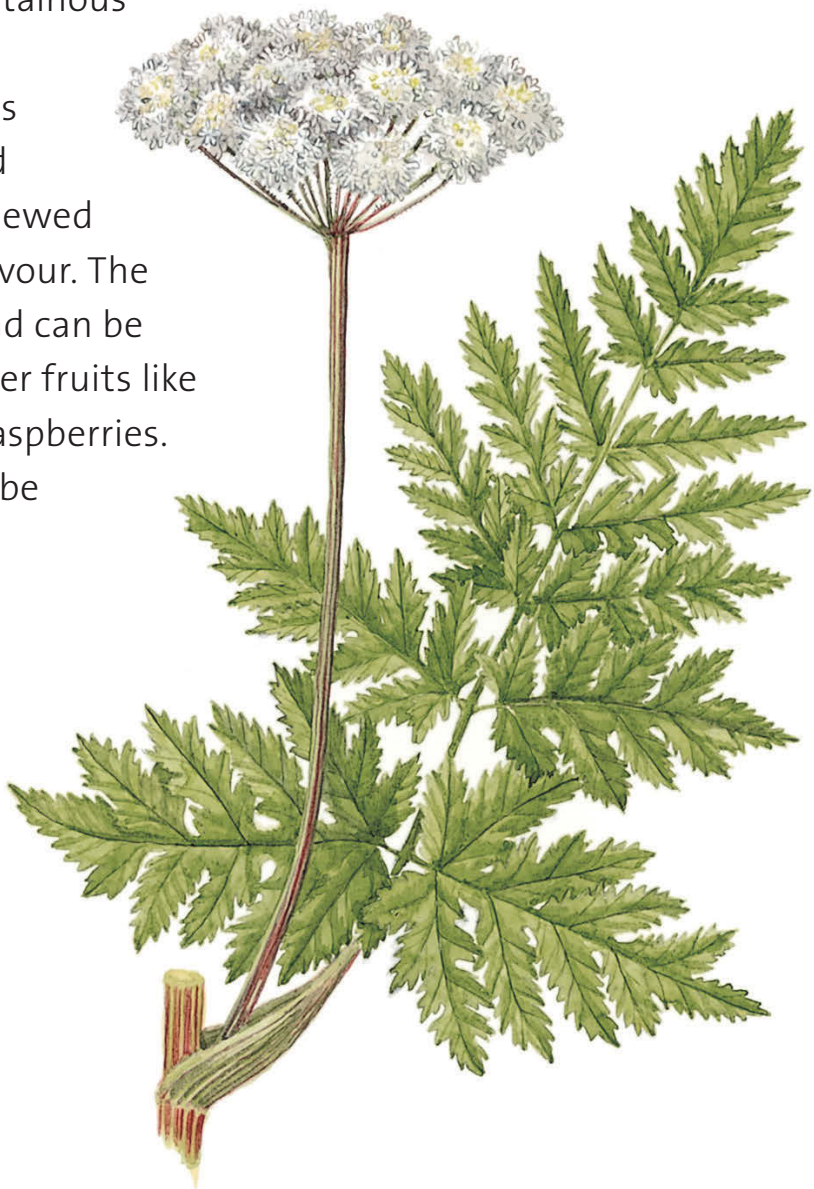
Sweet Cicely

Myrrhis odorata

Description An aromatic, perennial plant, growing up to 2m tall and 1m wide. Leaves are oval or wedge-shaped and pinnate with two to three leaflets. Flowers are 2–4mm wide with four unequal white petals, borne in individual umbels within one larger compound umbel. Fruit is up to 2.5cm long, turning from green to brown as it ripens.

Distribution Common in hedgerows and waste ground in northern Britain and the mountainous regions of Europe.

Uses Sweet cicely pods have a strong aniseed flavour and can be chewed raw to release the flavour. The leaves are sweeter and can be combined with sharper fruits like cooking apples and raspberries. Young roots can also be cooked like a parsnip.



Alexanders

Smyrnium olusatrum

Description An aromatic biennial plant growing up to 1.5m tall and 1m wide. Leaves are dark green and shiny with toothed margins. Flowers are yellow, borne in individual umbels within one larger compound umbel.

Distribution Common around the coasts of southern Britain and southern Europe northwards to north-western France.

Uses A good plant to forage in winter, Alexanders are best collected before the flowers open. Boil or steam stems like asparagus, or infuse in syrup for a mild liquorice-flavoured addition to drinks.

Ground Elder

Aegopodium podagraria

Description A perennial plant, reaching up to 1m tall, with an invasive tendency. Leaves are divided into three segments, each with three oval-shaped, pointed, toothed lobes. Flowers are white and arranged in individual umbels within one larger compound umbel.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and most of Europe, although rare in the south.

Uses Young leaves and shoots can be added to soups and salads, or sautéed with butter and garlic. The leaves have a sharp flavour, which makes them a good addition to dhals and curries.

Rock Samphire

Crithmum maritimum

Description A perennial plant, growing up to 50cm tall and 50cm wide. Stems are fleshy and hairless, and woody at the base. Leaves are straight, fleshy lobes with greenish-yellow flowers borne in thick-stalked umbels. Fruits are yellow or purple, growing up to 5–6mm each.

Distribution Common on the Atlantic coast of Britain and from north-west France downwards, including the coasts of the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

Uses Rock samphire can be cooked and eaten in the same way as marsh samphire, although they are unrelated. Wash stems and leaves before boiling or steaming, and serve like asparagus with a blob of butter. Stems, leaves and young seed pods can also be pickled.

Scots Lovage
Ligusticum scoticum

Description A perennial plant, reaching 60cm tall, with thick stems and large, toothed, diamond-shaped leaves. Flowers are yellow and borne in dense, compound umbels.

Distribution Locally common on clifftop grasslands on the coasts of Scotland, Northern Ireland and northern Europe.

Uses The leaves have a strong aroma of celery and yeast and make a good addition to soups to enhance the flavour of other vegetables. They can also be used to wrap around red meat before roasting, or paired with oily fish and vegetable pasta. Leaves make a healthy tea, full of vitamin C.

Goosegrass
Galium aparine

Description An annual plant with sprawling stems reaching up to 1.2m tall and 1m wide. Stems bear hooked bristles that allow it to cling to other vegetation. Leaves are narrow and oval-shaped, and flowers are whitish, borne in stalked clusters in the leaf axils. Fruits are globular and covered in more tiny hooks.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Young shoots and leaves can be gathered before the seeds harden, then chopped and used in fresh salads or vegetable dishes. Seeds can also be slow-roasted at a low temperature and ground to make a coffee substitute.

Comfrey
Symphytum officinale

Description A perennial plant with erect, bristly stems, reaching 1.2m tall. Leaves are pointed and oval-shaped, and flowers are tubular or bell-shaped with five white, pink or purple petals arranged in a drooping cluster.

Distribution Common and widespread in southern Britain and central and southern Europe.

Uses Comfrey leaves and shoots make a good addition to fresh salads, or they can be cooked with spinach and other vegetable dishes. Stalks should be collected before the flowers blossom, and eaten like asparagus, after blanching and steaming. Comfrey leaves also make a sweetish herbal tea.

Ribwort Plantain

Plantago lanceolata

Description A perennial plant, growing up to 45cm tall and 20cm wide. Leaves appear in a rosette at the base of the plant, and have a strong ribbed appearance due to their prominent veins. Flowers are tiny and arranged in a dense, cylindrical spike on a long stalk.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Young leaves are quite bitter but can be added to salads or cooked like spinach in small amounts. The flower buds have a mushroom-like flavour and can be used to make stock.

Valerian

Valeriana officinalis

Description A perennial plant, reaching up to 2m tall and 1m wide. Stems are erect and unbranched with deeply pinnately divided, pointed and toothed leaves. Flowers are pale pink and borne in individual clusters within one larger compound head.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Young leaves make a good addition to vegetable dishes but they can be bitter, so ensure they are fully boiled to produce a spinach-like flavour.

The roots are popular in traditional medicine, especially for anxiety and insomnia. Infuse one root in hot chocolate for a soothing treat.

Lesser Burdock

Arctium minus

Description A biennial plant, growing up to 1.5m tall with red-tinged stems and many ascending branches. Leaves are oval and pointed with heart-shaped leaves. Flower heads are oval-shaped with reddish-purple, tubular flowers surrounded by a cluster of hooked bracts.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain except northern Scotland, and in Europe except the far north.

Uses Young leaves make a great substitute for spinach, while the stems can be steamed and buttered like asparagus tips. The root can be peeled, boiled and sautéed as a side dish, or combined with dandelion and carrageen to make an aromatic beer. Dandelion, lesser burdock and hawthorn leaves also make a delicious herbal tea.

Milk Thistle

Silybum marianum

Description A biennial plant, reaching 1.5m tall with an erect stem and prickly, white-veined leaves with yellowish-white spines. Flower heads are 2–4cm wide with reddish-purple florets enclosed by large, spiny bracts on a long stem.

Distribution Locally common in dry, rocky soils in southern Britain, native to southern Europe and naturalised elsewhere.

Uses Before the flowers are able to develop, gather young leaves and stems and remove any spines. Boil these in salted water and sauté in butter for a tasty side dish. The roots can also be eaten raw or roasted with butter, while the flower head can be steamed with garlic and lemon, and eaten like a globe artichoke.

Bog Myrtle
Myrica gale

Description A deciduous shrub, growing up to 2m tall and 1m wide. It produces an aromatic resin from glands on its twigs and leaves. Leaves are oval-shaped, long and slightly toothed. Red or orange catkins appear at the tips of shiny, reddish shoots. Fruits are small, waxy berries.

Distribution Locally common in wet, acidic soil throughout western Europe and Britain, except in the south-east of Britain.

Uses Bog myrtle leaves were historically used to flavour beer before hops became popular in Britain. Alternatively, the leaves and berries can be dried and added to autumn stews, or chopped and combined with butter and wild marjoram to baste roast chicken.

Wood Avens

Geum urbanum

Description A perennial herb, reaching 60cm tall, with pinnate basal leaves that have one to five pairs of leaflets, each deeply lobed with toothed margins. Flowers grow up to 1.5cm wide, with five yellow petals, borne singularly or in loose clusters. Fruits are small and brown when ripe with purplish-brown hairs.

Distribution Common and widespread in southern Britain and Europe, but rare in Scotland and Scandinavia.

Uses Young leaves can be picked when the flowers start to blossom and used like spinach in summer soups and stews. The roots have historically been used as a spice for soups and ales due to their strong, clove-like flavour. Try adding a peeled root with cinnamon, nutmeg and peppercorn to mulled cider.

Woodruff

Galium odoratum

Description A sweet-scented perennial plant, reaching 25cm tall, with a slender, creeping rhizome that spreads into a carpet across the ground. Leaves are oval-shaped and arranged in whorls with six to nine prickles along the edges, and release a vanilla scent when crushed. Flowers are funnel-shaped with four small white petals.

Distribution Common in southern Britain but rare in northern Scotland and Ireland. Common throughout Europe except in the Mediterranean.

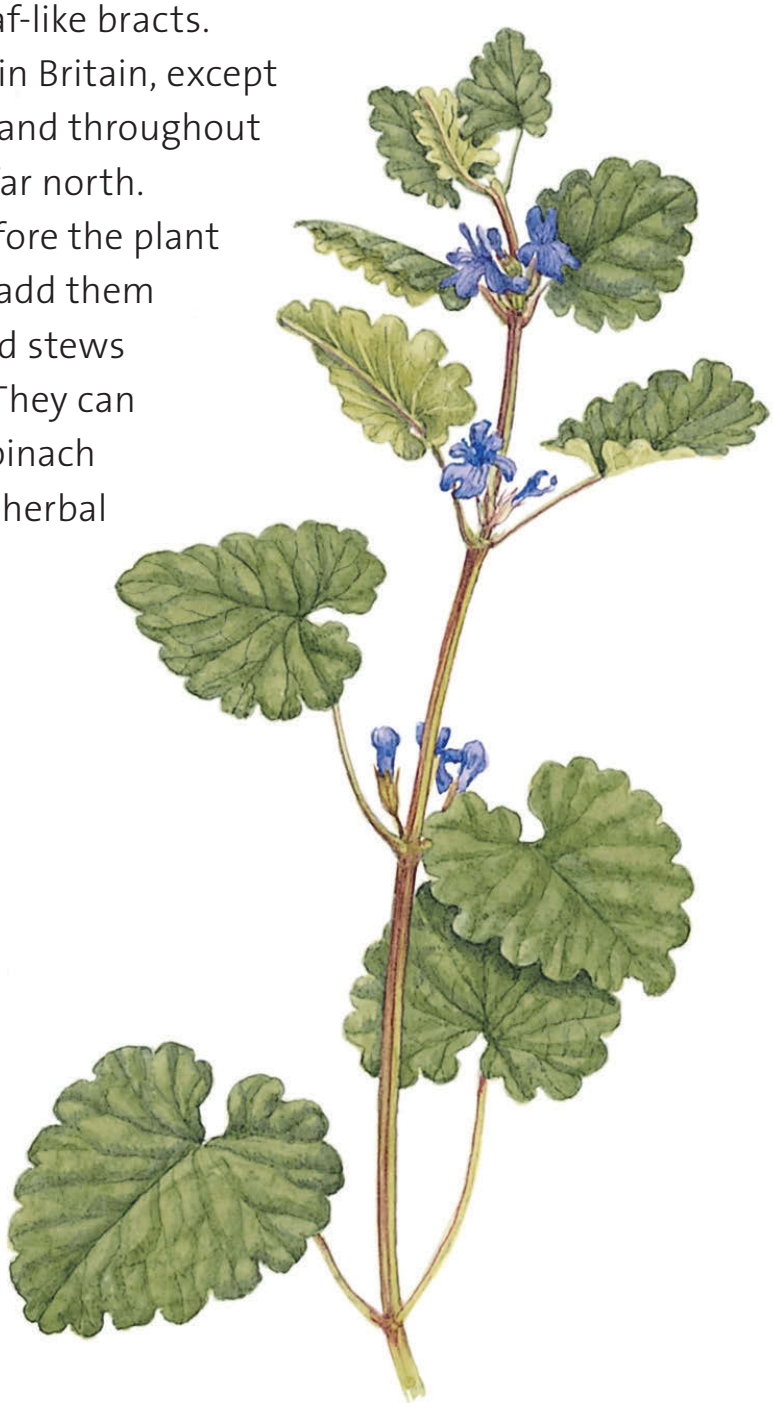
Uses Woodruff is traditionally used to flavour juices, beer, brandy, jam, ice cream and herbal tea. It can also be combined with borage flowers and added to cold 'fruit cup' drinks like Pimm's.

Ground Ivy
Glechoma hederacea

Description A creeping perennial plant, reaching 50cm tall, with erect, reddish stems. Leaves are kidney-shaped with toothed margins. Flowers are pale violet, growing up to 7mm long and appearing in pairs in the axils of leaf-like bracts.

Distribution Common in Britain, except in northern Scotland, and throughout Europe except in the far north.

Uses Collect leaves before the plant flowers in spring and add them to soups, stuffings and stews for a peppery punch. They can also be sautéed like spinach or dried and added to herbal tea blends.



Lemon Balm

Melissa officinalis

Description A scented, perennial plant reaching 60cm tall with erect, branched stems. Leaves are oval-shaped and pointed with shallow-toothed margins. Flowers are white or pinkish and arranged in axillary whorls.

Distribution A naturalised garden escape in Britain, native to south, east and central Europe.

Uses Lemon balm has citrus-scented leaves, which give an excellent flavour to wine and fruit juices when crushed. Young leaves can be added to salads, soups or sandwiches, or used as a lemon substitute in sweet and savoury dishes.

Wild Marjoram

Origanum vulgare

Description An aromatic, perennial plant with erect, branched stems, growing up to 90cm tall and 50cm wide. Leaves are oval-shaped and slightly hairy. Flowers are white or pinkish, 4–7cm long and arranged in dense, terminal clusters.

Distribution Grows in grassland, common in southern Britain but rarer in the north. Common and widespread in Europe except Scandinavia.

Uses A popular addition to Greek and Mediterranean cookery, wild marjoram can be dried or added fresh to stews, soups, pasta sauces, risottos and pizza. Alternatively, infuse a few leaves in sugar for a unique baking ingredient.

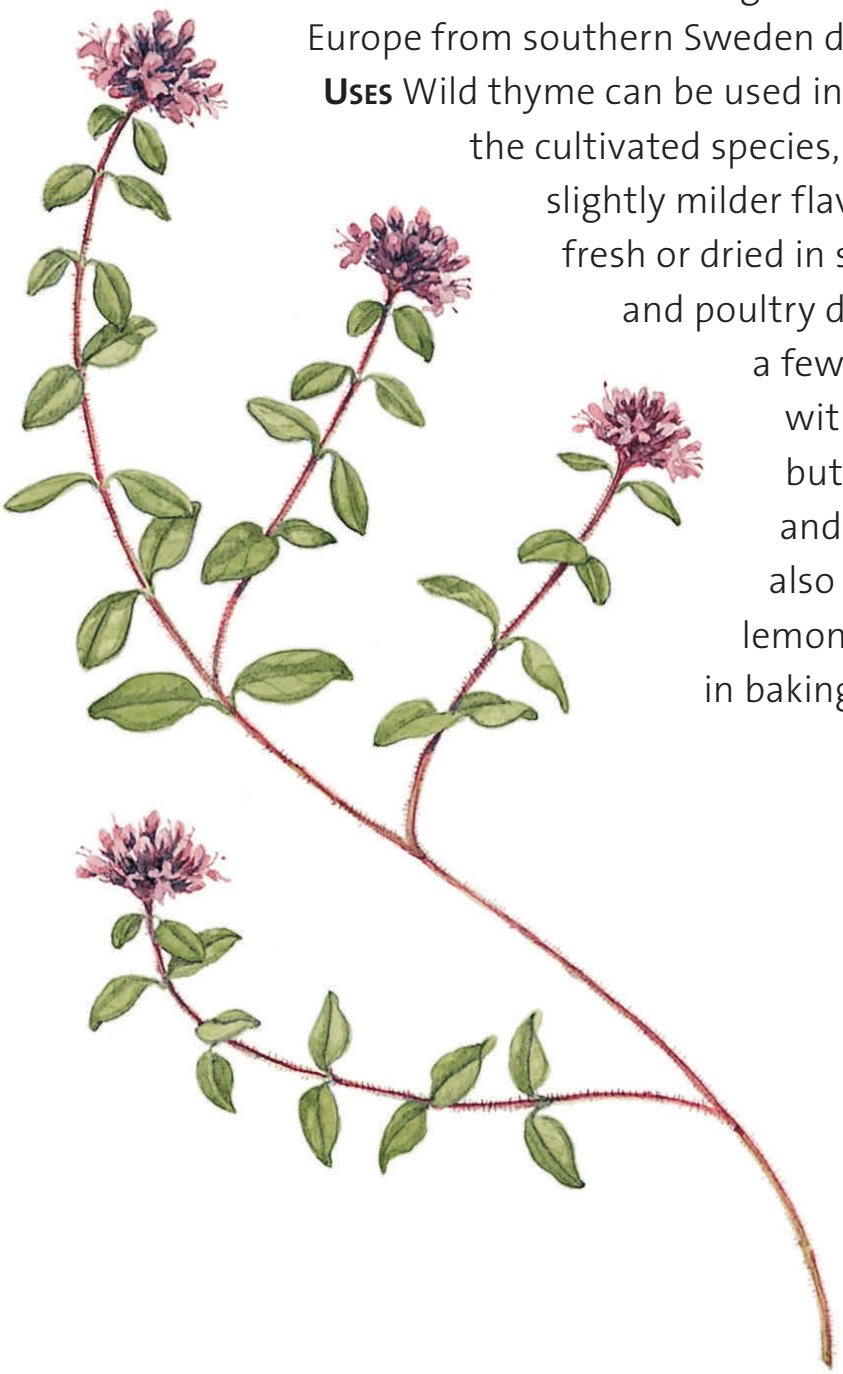
Wild Thyme

Thymus serpyllum

Description An aromatic, creeping perennial plant, reaching 10cm tall, that forms a mat across the soil. Leaves are small and oval-shaped, and it has small, purple flowers arranged in dense, terminal clusters.

Distribution Common throughout Britain and in Europe from southern Sweden downwards.

Uses Wild thyme can be used in the same way as the cultivated species, although it has a slightly milder flavour. Use the leaves fresh or dried in stuffings, soups and poultry dishes, or try adding a few to autumn risotto with mascarpone, butternut squash and chestnuts. It can also be combined with lemon and lime flavours in baking.



Chamomile

Chamaemelum nobile

Description An aromatic, perennial plant, growing up to 15cm tall and 30cm wide. The stems send up ascending branches covered in feathery leaves, and the flowers are white ray florets with yellow centres, borne singly on long stems. Distinguishable from similar species by its apple-like scent.

Distribution Grows in grassland, common in southern England, southern Ireland, Belgium and France.

Uses Flower heads can be picked and dried to make a delicious herbal tea. Beware not to pick too many as this is a vulnerable wildflower, although fortunately only one or two heads are needed to make an infusion.

Yarrow

Achillea millefolium

Description A perennial plant with erect, unbranched stems, growing up to 60m tall and 30cm wide. Leaves are long and feathery, with white, pink or reddish flowers arranged in flat, terminal clusters.
Distribution Common throughout Britain and Europe except in the Mediterranean region.

Uses Young leaves have a sweet but slightly bitter taste and can be chopped into salads, cooked like spinach or added to soup. Yarrow also has healing properties in traditional medicine, and an infusion can be made from the leaves to soothe colds, boost circulation and aid digestion.

Sand Leek

Allium scorodoprasum

Description A bulbous perennial, growing up to 40cm tall, with cylindrical stems and two or four long, flat, sheathing leaves. Flowers are bell-shaped and pink or white, arranged in clusters in a terminal umbel and enclosed by two papery sheaths. Flowers are sometimes replaced by bulbils.

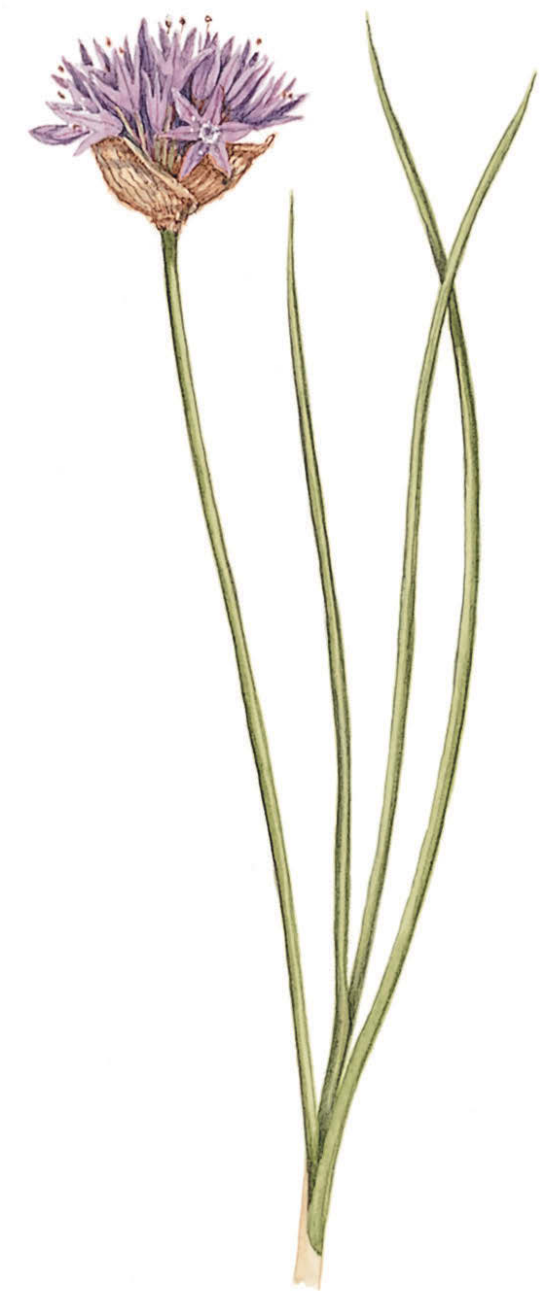
Distribution Locally distributed in woodland, meadows and coastland in northern Britain and central and eastern Europe.

Uses Both the flower bulbils and underground bulbs can be used as a milder alternative to garlic. Try roasting and swirling them into mashed potato, or slowly fry them and add them to autumn tarts.

Chives

Allium schoenoprasum

Description A perennial plant, reaching 25cm tall, growing in tufts from narrow, conical bulbs. Leaves are cylindrical and hollow. Flowers are pinkish-purple and bell-shaped with petal-like segments arranged in a dense, terminal cluster, enclosed by two or three papery sheaths.



Distribution Found locally in woodland and hedgerows in Wales, northern England and southern Scotland. More widespread in Europe except in the south, where it is confined to mountainous regions.

Uses Fresh chives are full of flavour and can be finely chopped and added to cottage cheese, baked potatoes, soups, sauces, omelettes, salads and sandwiches.

Wild Garlic

Allium ursinum

Description An aromatic, perennial plant, reaching 40cm tall with a solitary bulb and an angled stem. Leaves are flat, oval-shaped and pointed, growing 8–25cm long with parallel veins. Flowers have six white, petal-like segments arranged in a loose cluster and protected by two papery sheaths.

Distribution Locally common in shaded woodland throughout mainland Britain and most of Europe except the Mediterranean and the north-east.

Uses Combined with nettles, wild garlic is an excellent ingredient for homemade pesto. Alternatively, it can be used in any dish that would usually contain garlic or spring onions. Try chopping and adding to cheese scones, or use the leaves to wrap around pieces of a hard cheese like Cornish yarg.

Borage

Borago officinalis

Description An erect, annual plant, growing up to 60cm tall and 50cm wide, with pointed, oval-shaped leaves. Flowers have five blue petals arranged in loose, drooping clusters. Fruit is an oval nut.

Distribution A garden escape in Britain but native in southern Europe and widely naturalised further north.

Uses Young leaves and flowers can be chopped and added to salads or sautéed with garlic and butter for a tasty side dish. The flowers can be crystallised and used to decorate cakes and biscuits.

Silverweed

Potentilla anserina

Description A perennial plant, reaching 20cm tall, with long, rooting stolons. Leaves are silvery-grey, finely toothed and arranged in a rosette. The flowers are solitary with five yellow petals, borne on a long stem arising from a leaf axil.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe, except in the far south.

Uses Mature plants growing in soft soil are the best for harvesting as their roots are the most substantial. Wash roots thoroughly and scrape to remove the dark outer skin. They can then be eaten raw or cooked; they have a taste similar to parsnips.

Bitter Vetch

Lathyrus montanus

Description A small, perennial plant with winged stems, growing up to 50cm tall and 30cm wide. Leaves are long and linear, and flowers emerge crimson but grow bluish with age. Fruits are reddish-brown, hairless pods, and the plant overwinters as a starch-rich root tuber up to 3cm wide.

Distribution Common in woodland and grassland throughout Britain except East Anglia and the western, central and southern regions of Europe.

Uses From autumn onwards, the tubers can be dug out of the ground where there is an abundance of plants. Although they can be eaten raw, they are best steamed, boiled or roasted and eaten like chestnuts.

Pignut

Conopodium majus

Description A perennial plant with a slender stem, growing up to 30cm tall and 25cm wide. Leaves are pinnate and wither quickly, while the flowers grow in white umbels, arranged within one larger compound umbel. The root tuber is dark brown and tastes of hazelnuts.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and western Europe eastwards to Italy.

Uses Wash and peel the root before eating raw, or boil and roast it like a chestnut. It also makes a good addition to stir-fries and noodle soups with fresh ginger root and soy sauce.

Wild Parsnip

Pastinaca sativa

Description An aromatic, biennial plant with tall, hollow stems, reaching up to 1.5m tall. Leaves are pinnate with broad, toothed lobes, and flowers are small and yellow, borne in compound umbels up to 10cm wide.

Distribution Common in wasteland and grassland in south-east England but rare in the rest of Britain. Common and widespread throughout Europe, except in the far north.

Uses Wait until the first frost has passed to unearth parsnip roots as the flesh will be more tender and sweet. Wear gloves when handling this plant and avoid getting its sap on exposed skin as it reacts with sunlight and can cause severe burns. The wild variety is spindly but tastes excellent finely sliced and fried with other root vegetables to make crisps. Alternatively, sauté with garlic for a delicious side dish.

Salsify

Tragopogon porrifolius

Description A perennial plant, growing up to 1.25m tall, with long, linear leaves. Flower heads are solitary and emerge as dull purple florets up to 5cm wide.

Distribution Grows in wasteland and grassland; uncommon in south-east England. Native to the Mediterranean and eastern Europe but widely naturalised throughout Europe.

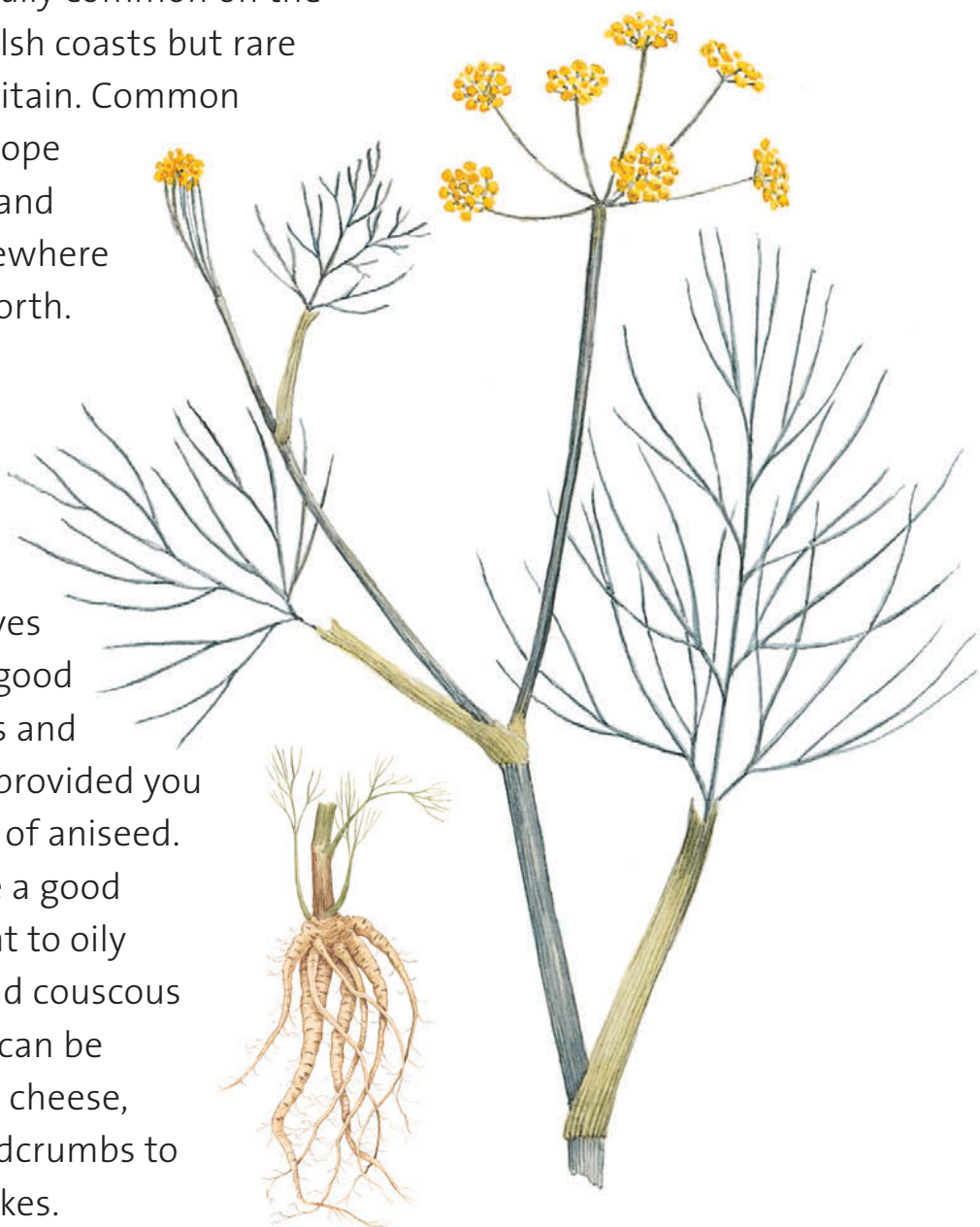
Uses The long, white roots can be unearthed, rinsed and peeled carefully, before boiling or steaming. Serve with a little butter, garlic, chilli and salt.

Fennel

Foeniculum vulgare

Description A hairless perennial plant reaching 2m tall with bluish-green, vertically grooved stems and a characteristic aniseed smell when crushed. Leaves are feathery in appearance and flowers are yellow, arranged in simple clusters within a larger compound umbel. Fruits are oval-shaped and ridged.

Distribution Locally common on the English and Welsh coasts but rare elsewhere in Britain. Common in southern Europe and cultivated and naturalised elsewhere except in the north.



Uses Young leaves and stems are good in soups, salads and light hot pots, provided you enjoy the taste of aniseed. They also make a good accompaniment to oily fish, chicken and couscous dishes, or they can be combined with cheese, garlic and breadcrumbs to make fennel cakes.

Goat's-beard

Tragopogon pratensis

Description A perennial plant, growing up to 70cm tall, with long, pointed leaves enclosing a sheathing base. Flower heads are bright yellow and 15–25mm across, singularly borne on the tips of stems. Flowers close at midday, giving them their alternative name, Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon.

Distribution Common and widespread in England and Wales but rare in northern Scotland and Ireland. Widespread in central and southern Europe except Scandinavia.

Uses Their brown tap roots can be dug up, peeled and eaten in the same way as salsify. The stems and young buds can be steamed like asparagus, while young leaves can be added to soups and salads.

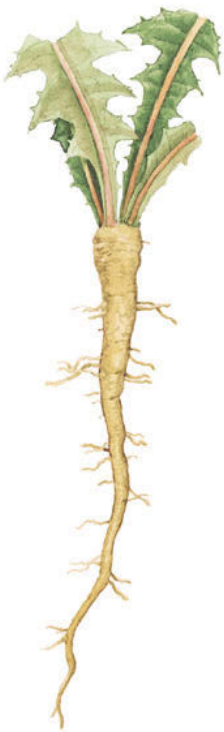
Dandelion

Taraxacum officinale

Description A robust, perennial plant, reaching 50cm tall, found on all but the poorest acidic soils. Leaves are pointed and deeply toothed, growing up to 20cm long around a dense basal rosette. The solitary flower heads are bright yellow and borne at the tips of hollow stalks.

Distribution Common throughout Britain and Europe.

Uses Dandelions can be used from root to tip. Flower heads have a delicate taste and can be used to make dandelion wine. Young flower buds can be pickled like capers and young leaves can be eaten raw in salads or sautéed with butter like spinach. The root can also be cooked like a parsnip or roasted and ground to make a coffee substitute.



Orange Peel Fungus

Aleuria aurantia

Description This fungus looks like discarded orange peel, hence the name. Upper surface is bright orange and smooth, while the lower surface is whitish and velvety. Fruiting body emerges cup-shaped and flattens with age. Flesh is pale and brittle with no distinctive taste. Grows up to 10cm across and 2–4cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland and short grass, August to November.

Uses Best used in combination with other mushrooms, orange peel fungus can also be thinly sliced and added to salads. Best preserved by drying.

Bay Cup
Peziza badia

Description A small fruiting body shaped like a cup, with an olive-brown upper surface and a paler, reddish-brown lower surface. Flesh is brittle and thin with no distinctive taste. Grows 3–8cm across and 1–2cm tall.
Distribution Common throughout the temperate lowlands of Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland and on bare paths, August to November.
Uses Meaty in texture, bay cups, also known as pig's ears, can be used to bulk up stews, casseroles and vegetarian dishes. Try frying with coriander, onion, garlic and olive oil and eating in tortilla wraps with salsa. Best preserved by drying. Not to be eaten raw.

Ruby Elfcup

Sarcoscypha coccinea

Description Has a smooth, scarlet upper surface and a whitish, felty lower surface covered in small hairs. The fruiting body is cup-shaped and has a short, narrow stem, and the flesh is pale, brittle and thin with no distinctive odour or taste. Grows up to 1–5cm across and 1.5cm tall.

Distribution Widespread across Europe and commonly found in western Britain. Grows on dead wood, January to April.

Uses Ruby Elfcups have an earthy flavour but are not highly valued for their taste. They are at their best when dried, or try serving as a canapé filled with garlic pesto.

White Saddle

Helvella crispa

Description Fruiting body has a whitish, saddle-shaped cap with two or three lobes and a wavy margin. Stem is white, stout and strongly ridged, and the flesh is white and brittle with a pleasant texture and indistinct taste. Grows 3–6cm across and 6–12cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread in Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland and on paths, July to November.

Uses White Saddle must be cooked thoroughly to destroy helvellic acid inside, which is poisonous. This fungus is valued more for texture over taste, and can be sliced and mixed in with other mushroom dishes. Avoid eating large quantities. Best preserved by drying.

Elfin Saddle

Helvella lacunosa

Description A blackish-grey, lobed cap on a grey, hollow stem. Flesh is grey and thick but brittle, with an earthy odour and taste. Grows up to 5cm across and 3–10cm tall.

Distribution Fairly widespread in Britain and Europe. Usually found on broad-leaved, mixed and coniferous woodlands, often on burnt ground from August to October.

Uses Elfin Saddle must be cooked thoroughly to destroy helvellic acid inside, which is poisonous. Can be added to mixed mushroom dishes, or try frying with wild greens. Best preserved by drying.

Summer Truffle

Tuber aestivum

Description A rare treasure, the fruiting body is irregularly spherical with a blackish-brown, warty surface. The interior is solid and yellowish-grey to brown, marbled with whitish veins. Flavour is deliciously nutty and the odour is strong and sweet. Grows up to 7cm across.

Distribution Rare in southern England, more common in central and southern Europe. Grows in chalky woodland soil, May to October.

Uses Highly prized edible fungi, truffles are difficult to find without the help of a trained dog or pig to sniff them out. They have a strong flavour and are best used in small amounts. For best results, remove the outer layer and preserve in olive oil. The oil can then also be used as a luxurious condiment.

Black Morel
Morchella elata

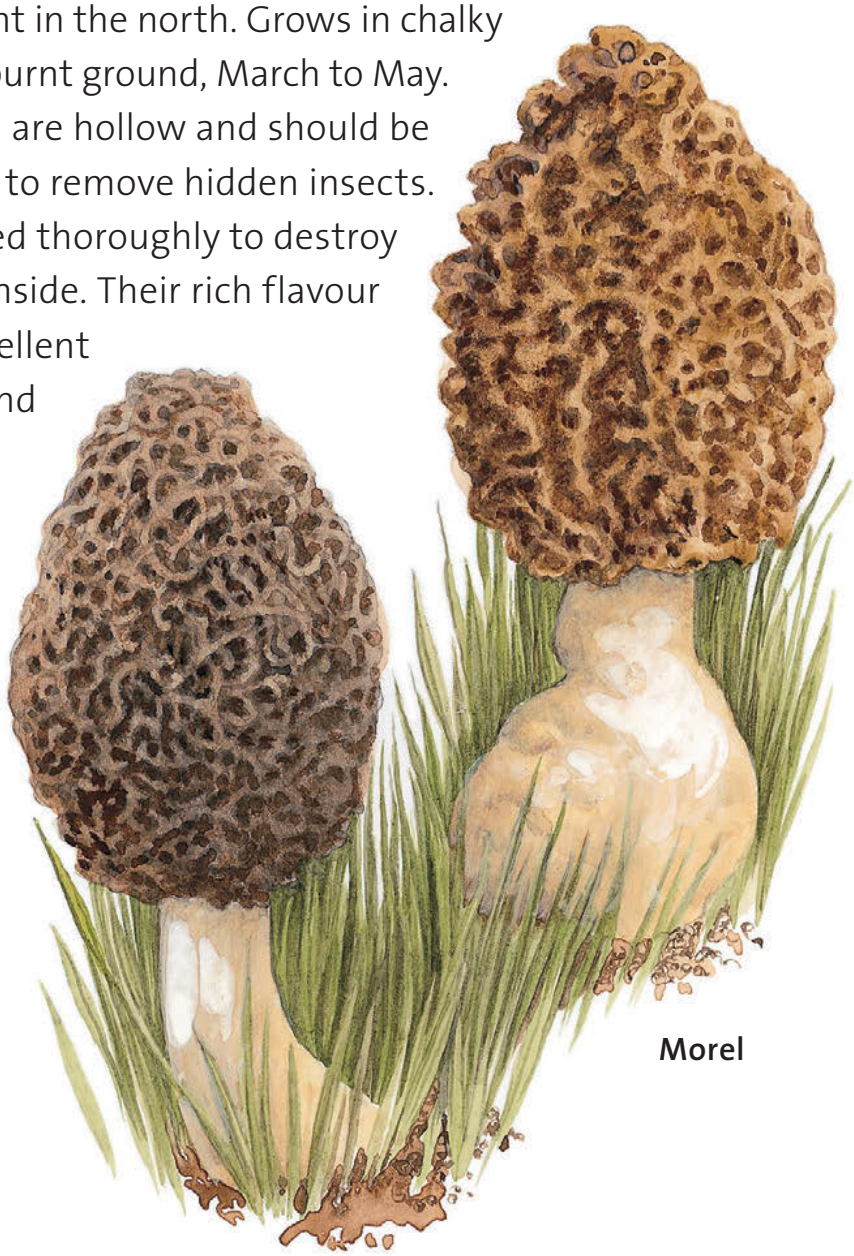
AND

Morel
Morchella esculenta

Description Both species have brown, honeycombed, oval or conical caps on stout whitish stems. The flesh is white and brittle with no distinctive taste. Common morel is the larger of the two, growing up to 9cm across and 25cm tall, while the black morel (which tends to grow in more northerly regions) is up to 4cm across and 15cm tall.

Distribution Widespread over most of Britain and Europe but common morel is less frequent in the north. Grows in chalky woodland soil and burnt ground, March to May.

Uses Fruiting bodies are hollow and should be cleaned thoroughly to remove hidden insects. They must be cooked thoroughly to destroy haemolytic toxins inside. Their rich flavour makes them an excellent addition to soups and stews, or try drying them to intensify the taste.



Black Morel

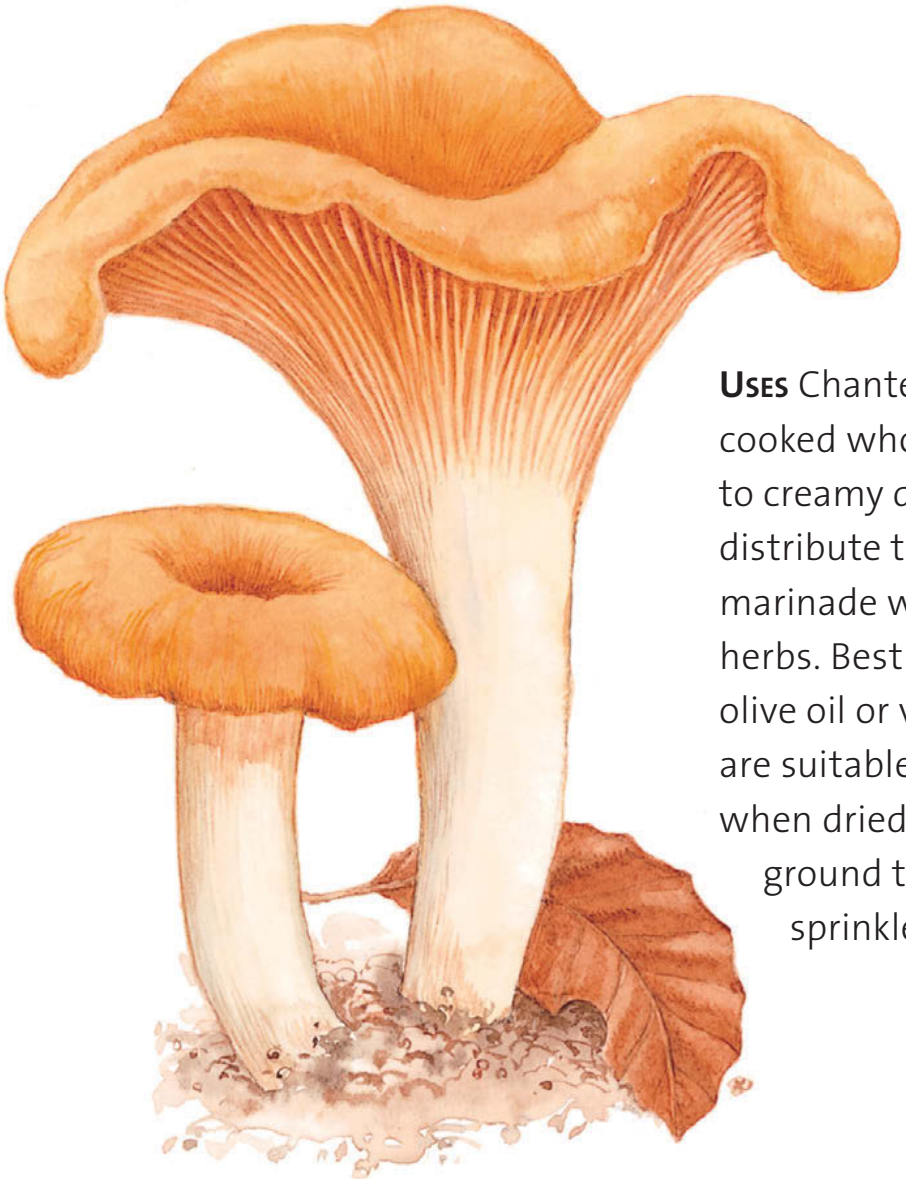
Morel

Chanterelle

Cantharellus cibarius

Description Fruiting bodies and stems are creamy yellow and the cap is flattish with a central depression. The spore-bearing ridges are folded and widely spaced, running from the cap down the stem. Flesh has a slight apricot odour and a peppery taste. Grows up to 10cm across and 8cm tall.

Distribution Widespread and fairly common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in mossy woodland clearings, June to December.



Uses Chanterelles are best cooked whole. Add them to creamy dishes to further distribute their flavour, or marinade with garlic and herbs. Best preserved in olive oil or vinegar. They are suitable for drying, but when dried they are best ground to a powder and sprinkled into dishes.

Trumpet Chanterelle

Cantharellus tubaeformis

Description A dingy brown cap with a wavy margin, the spore-bearing ridges beneath are yellowish, turning to grey with age. Has a yellowish, hollow stem with tough, thin flesh that tastes slightly bitter. Side-on, it looks like an inverted umbrella. Grows 1.5–6cm across and 3–8cm tall.

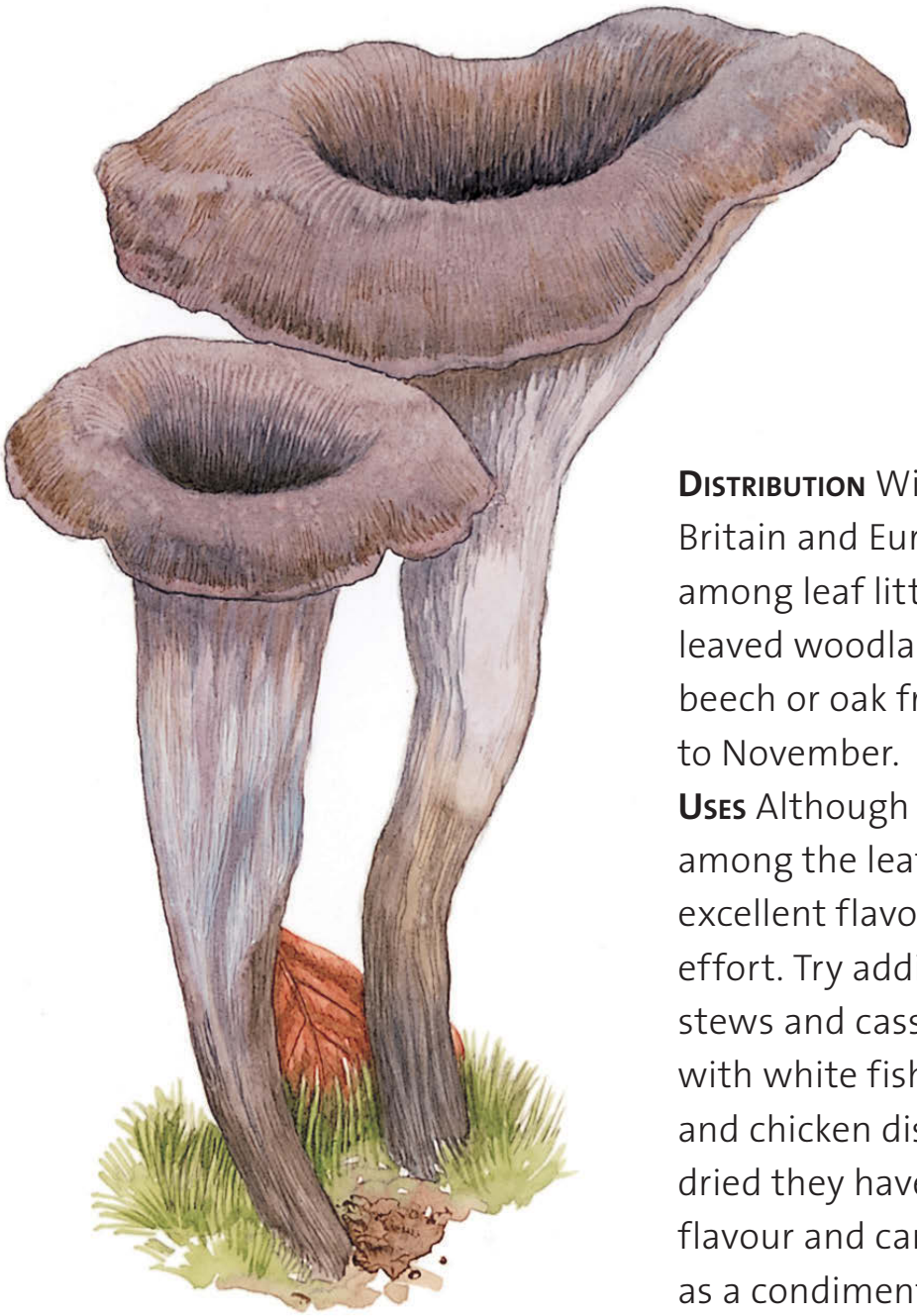
Distribution Widespread in Britain and Europe. Grows in acidic woodland soil and on riverbanks, August to December.

Uses Best eaten cooked as they are bitter when raw. Their earthy flavour and delicate texture mean they are best enjoyed pan-fried with a little butter, or add to noodle dishes for a deeper flavour.

Horn of Plenty

Craterellus cornucopioides

Description A greyish-brown to black fruiting body shaped like a deep, wrinkled funnel or trumpet. Lower surface is smooth, ash grey and spore-bearing with greyish-brown flesh. Grows up to 8cm across and 10cm tall.



Distribution Widespread in Britain and Europe. Found among leaf litter in broad-leaved woodlands, especially beech or oak from August to November.

Uses Although difficult to find among the leaf litter, their excellent flavour is worth the effort. Try adding to soups, stews and casseroles, or pair with white fish, omelettes and chicken dishes. When dried they have a truffle-like flavour and can be crumbled as a condiment.

Sinuous Chanterelle

Craterellus sinuosus

Description A greyish-brown fruiting body, roughly funnel-shaped with a frilly cap. Lower surface is creamy-white and wrinkled. Flesh is pale with a fruity odour. Grows 1–5cm across and 2–3cm tall.
Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in broadleaf woodlands, July to November.
Uses A good addition to other mushroom dishes, this fungus also adds texture and flavour to soups, stews and casseroles. Best preserved by drying or submerging in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Field or Moor Club

Clavaria argillacea

Description A smooth, club-shaped fruiting body, greenish-yellow at the top and deeper yellow on the stem. Flesh is pale and brittle with no distinctive odour or taste. Grows 2–8mm across and up to 8cm tall.

Distribution Widespread in Britain and Europe. Grows among moss on sandy heaths, August to September.

Uses These small fungi can be eaten raw in salad or added to other mixed mushroom dishes for extra texture, such as stews and casseroles. Best preserved in olive oil.

White Spindles
Clavaria fragilis

Description A white fruiting body with a yellowish tip and a smooth, vertically grooved base. Flesh is white and brittle with an earthy scent and no distinctive flavour. Grows 3–7mm across and up to 12cm tall.

Distribution Widely distributed and fairly common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodlands, July to October.

Uses Can be eaten raw in salad or added to other mixed mushroom dishes for extra texture, such as stews and casseroles. Best preserved in olive oil.

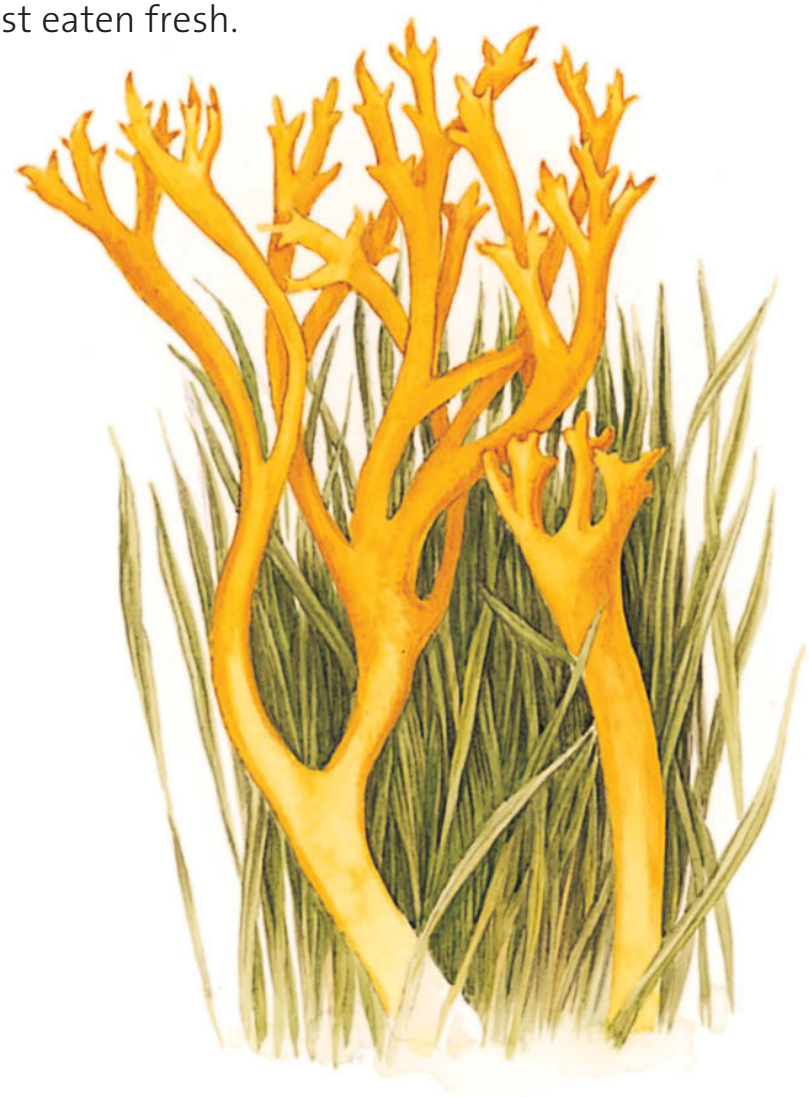
Meadow Coral

Clavulinopsis corniculata

Description A bright eggyolk yellow fruiting body that fades to white nearer the base, with curved branches that give an antler-like appearance. Flesh is fragile with a fairly bitter taste. Grows up to 8cm tall with a varied width.

Distribution Widespread but rare throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in short grass and open woodlands, July to November.

Uses Bitterness will improve on cooking, particularly if added in small amounts to other dishes like omelettes. Its bright colour also makes it an attractive garnish. It does not preserve well and is best eaten fresh.

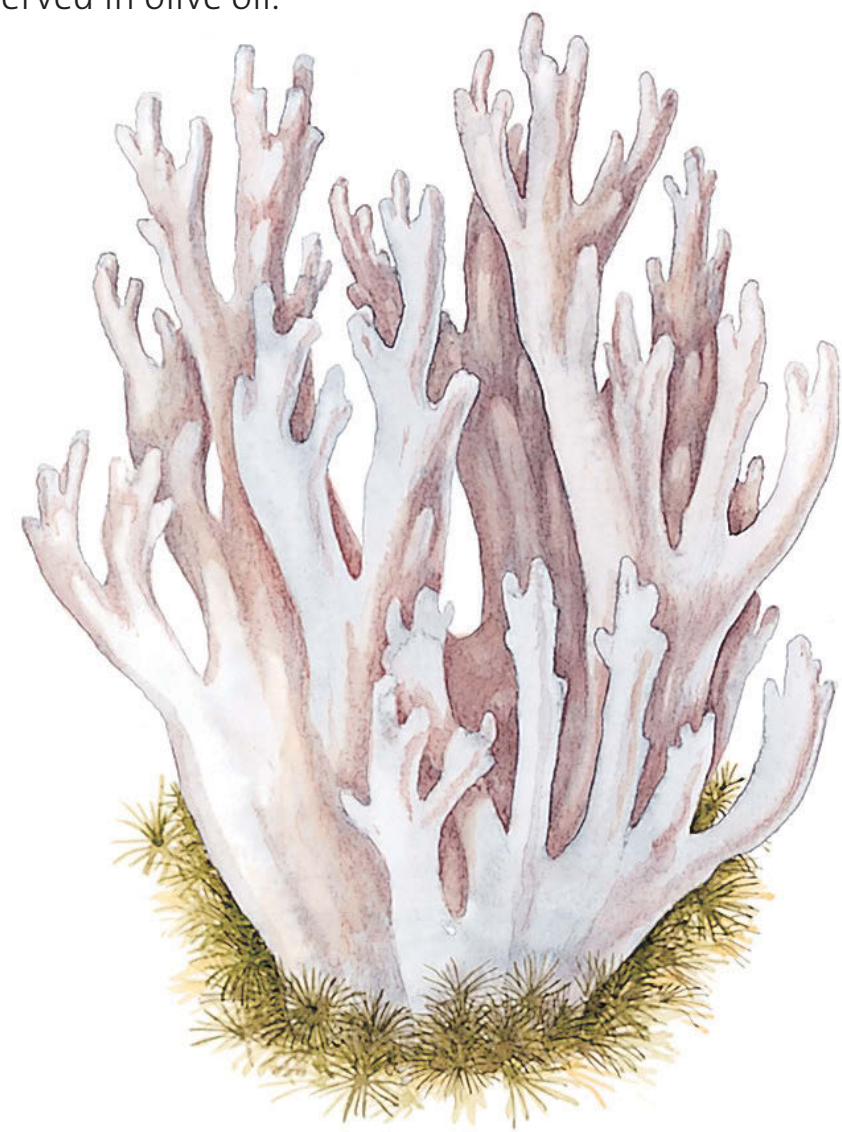


Grey Coral
Clavulina cinerea

Description An ash-grey fruiting body with antler-like branches arranged in dense clusters. Flesh is soft, tough and greyish-white, with a faint mushroomy odour and no distinctive taste. Grows up to 10cm tall with a varied width.

Distribution Widespread and common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows near woodland paths, July to November.

Uses A good addition to salad in small amounts when raw, or lightly sauté and add to other dishes like omelettes, soups and quiches. Best preserved in olive oil.



Crested Coral

Clavulina coralloides

Description A white, densely tufted fruiting body with lots of fringed branches. Flesh is white, soft and slightly tough, with no distinctive odour or flavour. If the base is greyish or black, avoid eating due to infection from another fungus. Grows up to 8cm tall with a varied width.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in coniferous and broadleaf woodlands, June to November.

Uses Lightly sauté and add to omelettes for the best flavour. Can be preserved in olive oil.

Wrinkled Club

Clavulina rugosa

Description A whitish-grey fruiting body shaped like a club, sometimes with irregular, blunt-tipped branches. The surface is wrinkled and twisted, and the flesh is white, soft and thick with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows up to 12cm tall with a varied width.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows near woodland paths, August to November.

Uses A nice addition to other mushroom dishes such as soups, casseroles and stews. Best preserved in olive oil.

Wood Hedgehog
Hydnum repandum

Description The fruiting body has a smooth, creamy cap. Underneath, the spore-bearing layer is spiny and slightly darker. It has a short, thick stem. The flesh is soft, thick and white with a crumbly texture and slightly bitter taste. Grows up to 3–10cm across and 2–6cm tall.
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland and mossy riverbanks, June to November.
Uses Slices of the fungus can be added to meat or fish dishes, or try pickling in a jar with cider vinegar and capers to make a delicious antipasti. Alternatively, slice and dry for storage.

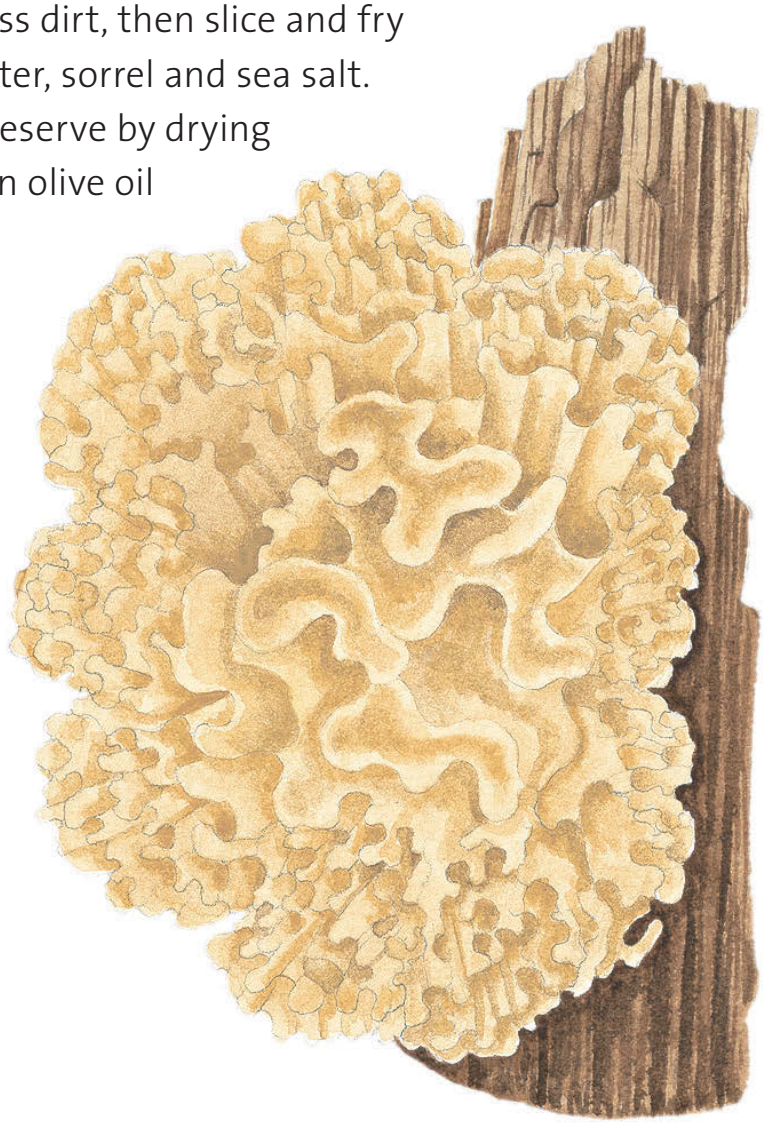
Wood Cauliflower

Sparassis crispa

Description A creamy-white fruiting body with ribbon-like curling branches that bind together to form a large, cauliflower-like mass. This attaches to the tree using a short stem. Tough, whitish flesh with no distinctive taste. Grows up to 60cm across.

Distribution Widespread but rare throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in coniferous woodlands, July to November.

Uses After picking, cauliflower fungus can stay fresh for several days by immersing the cut stem in refrigerated water. To cook, rinse away excess dirt, then slice and fry with a little butter, sorrel and sea salt. Alternatively, preserve by drying or submerging in olive oil or cider vinegar.



Scaly Tooth

Sarcodon squamosus

Description A large fruiting body that has a flattish cap at first, becoming concave with age. The yellowish-brown cap turns darker brown with coarse scales. Lower surface is spiny and turns from white to purplish-brown with age. Has a thick, white stem with firm, white flesh with a spicy odour and a strong, slightly bitter taste. Grows up to 7cm tall and 10–25cm across.

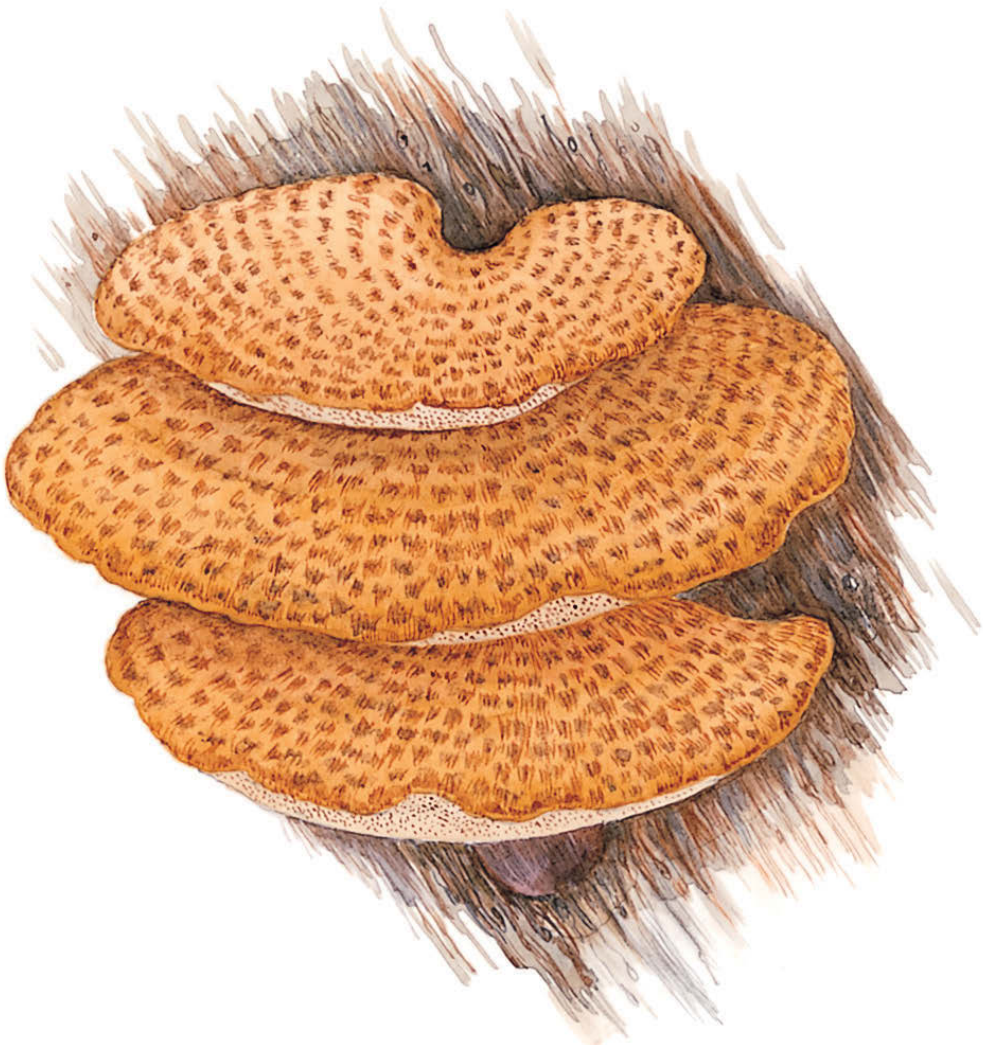
Distribution Can be found in Scotland and northern Europe, but quite rare. Grows in mountainous coniferous woodlands, July to November.

Uses The strong flavour makes it a good addition to other mushroom dishes, or sauté young specimens in butter and garlic. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Dryad's Saddle

Polyporus squamosus

Description One of the largest polypores, reaching up to 60cm across and 5cm thick. This bracket fungus is attached to wood by a short, dark stem, while the upper surface is creamy yellow to brown with concentric bands of triangular scales. Underneath, the spore-bearing surface is whitish-cream and the flesh is thick and leathery.
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on broadleaf trees, logs and stumps, July to November.
Uses Collect when young. The strong flavour of the flesh makes it a great addition to soups, stews and casseroles, or preserve by drying or submerging in olive oil.



Hen of the Woods

Grifola frondosa

Description A cauliflower-like fruiting body with a short stem, branching into multiple olive-brown, fan-shaped caps layered over each other. Lower surface is white, and flesh is white and thick with a sweet aroma and pleasant flavour when young. Each fruiting body grows up to 10cm across, while the entire clump can reach 50cm in diameter.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe but nowhere common. Grows at the base of broadleaf trees, August to October.

Uses Choose the youngest caps, which smell the sweetest, as the flavour deteriorates with age. Pick individual caps, rinse in cold water and add to mixed mushroom dishes for extra flavour and texture. It also dries well and can be used as a condiment if ground to a powder. A popular mushroom in Japanese dishes.

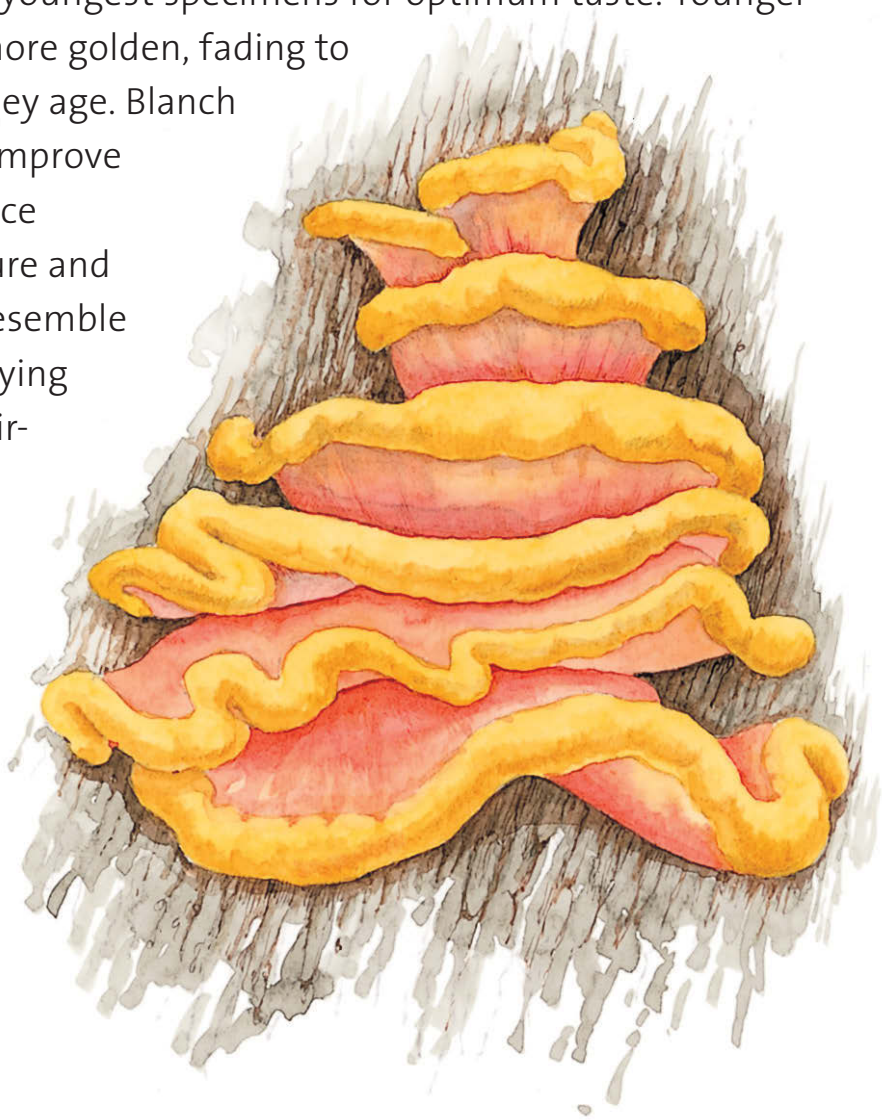
Chicken of the Woods

Laetiporus sulphureus

Description A bracket fungus with a fan-shaped, crinkly fruiting body growing in tiered clusters. Upper surface is egg-yolk yellow but darkens with age. Lower surface is sulphur-yellow and the young flesh is thick, soft and yellowish-orange. Strong odour and taste, which is slightly sharp and sour. Grows 10–40cm across and up to 12cm thick.

Distribution Fairly common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on broadleaf trees, April to November.

Uses Choose the youngest specimens for optimum taste. Younger specimens are more golden, fading to pale yellow as they age. Blanch in salt water to improve flavour and reduce bitterness. Texture and taste is said to resemble chicken, so try frying and adding to stir-fries, stews and casseroles. Does not preserve well.



Beefsteak Fungus

Fistulina hepatica

Description A large bracket fungus shaped like a tongue or liver, with the colour and texture of raw meat. Upper surface turns from pinkish-brown to dark brown, while the lower surface is initially whitish, turning brown with age. Soft, succulent flesh that oozes blood-red juice, with no distinctive odour and a metallic taste. Grows 10–25cm across and up to 6cm thick.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows near the bottom of broadleaf trees, July to October.

Uses Choose only the youngest specimens. Try frying in breadcrumbs or adding to creamy dishes like carbonara, which helps reduce the slightly acidic taste. Their meaty texture means they can also be simply fried, grilled or barbecued whole. Does not preserve well.

Aniseed Cockleshell

Lentinellus cochleatus

Description A chestnut-brown fruiting body with a smooth, shiny cap shaped like an ear. The gills are pinkish-white and the stem is smooth and rusty brown. Flesh is tough and pinkish-brown with a strong aniseed aroma but no distinctive taste. Grows up to 10cm across and 10cm tall.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on broadleaf stumps and branches, July to December.

Uses Best enjoyed on its own, lightly sautéed in butter and garlic. Makes a good addition to omelettes, stews, casseroles and other mixed mushroom dishes, or dry and grind to a powder for a pleasant condiment.

Branched Oyster

Pleurotus cornucopiae

Description The cap is cream-coloured and convex when young, becoming flatter and browner with age. Gills and stem are whitish, usually fused with others in the tuft. Flesh is firm and white with a slight aniseed odour and no distinctive taste. Grows 5–15cm across and up to 5cm tall.

Distribution Uncommon but widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on broadleaf stumps and branches, August to November.

Uses Collect young specimens for the best flavour and remove tougher stems before cooking. A good addition to meat, fish and mixed mushroom dishes. Preserve by drying or submerging in olive oil or cider vinegar.

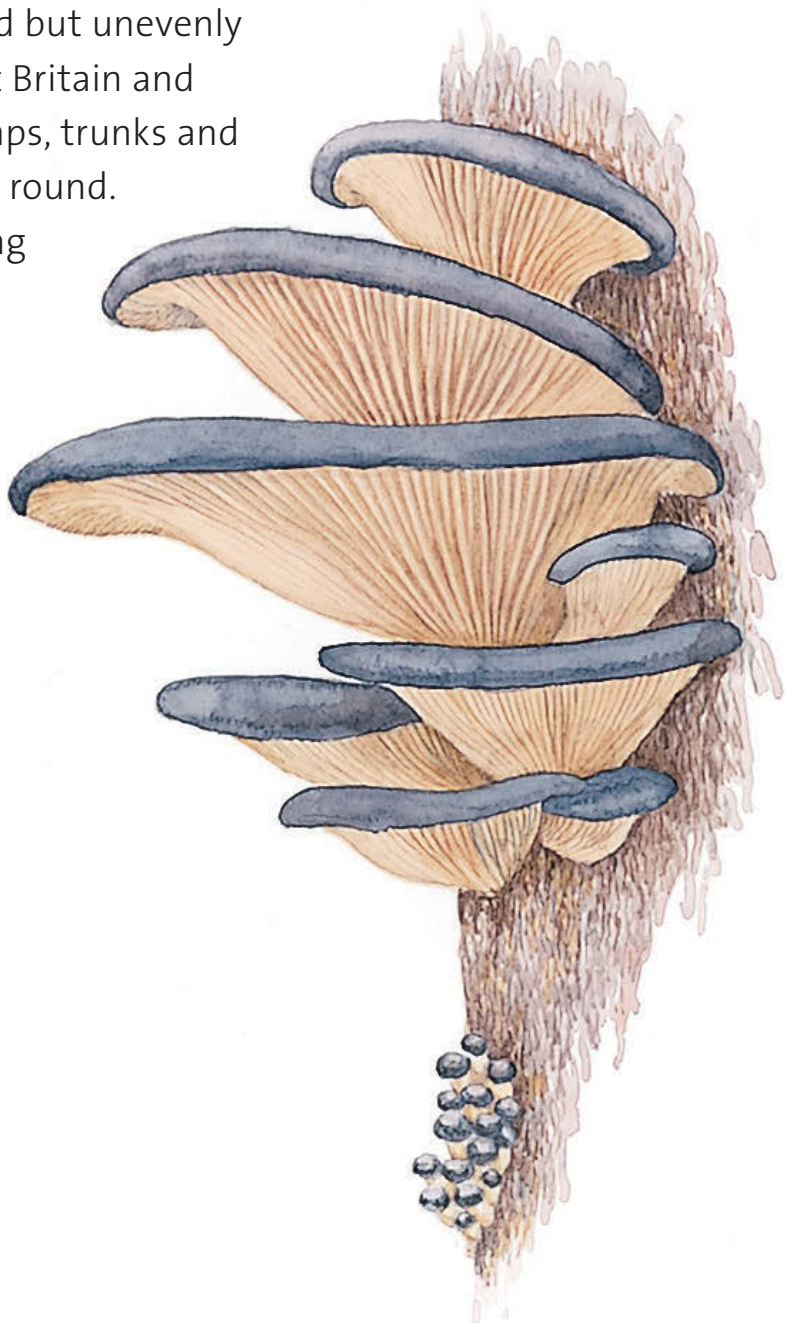
Oyster Mushroom

Pleurotus ostreatus

Description The fruiting body is convex when young, growing into an oyster shell shape as it ages. Cap colour varies from bluish-grey to cream-brown, and young gills are white, becoming creamy with age. Flesh is thick and white with a pleasant odour and taste. Grows 6–14cm across and 2–3cm tall.

Distribution Widespread but unevenly distributed throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on stumps, trunks and fallen branches all year round.

Uses Collect when young for optimum flavour. Remove tough stems before cooking and add to dishes for extra meatiness. Can also be dried or preserved in olive oil or cider vinegar.



Scarlet Waxcap

Hygrocybe coccinea

Description A blood-red, bell-shaped cap with widely spaced yellow gills that redden with age. Flesh is orange-red with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows up to 4cm across and 5cm tall.

Distribution Widespread in Britain and Europe. Grows on pastures, lawns and woodland, August to December.

Uses A good addition to omelettes and quiches, or can be added raw to salads for decoration as well as flavour and texture. They can be dried but are best used fresh.

Honey Fungus
Armillaria mellea

Description The cap varies in shape and colour, from ochre-yellow to dark brown, growing convex at first and flattening with age. Cap has a cluster of brown fibrous scales in the centre. Gills are white, turning yellowish then brown with rusty spots. Stem varies from white to brown. Flesh is white with an acidic odour and bitter taste. Grows up to 15cm wide and 15cm tall.

Distribution Common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on deciduous and coniferous trees, August to December.

Uses Choose the youngest caps and boil in salted water for two minutes to remove toxins. They then make a good addition to soups, stews, curries, casseroles and stir-fries, or fry alone with butter and garlic. Can also be dried and ground into a condiment.

Goblet

Pseudoclitocybe cyathiformis

Description A dark, greyish-brown fruiting body with a funnel-shaped cap. Gills are greyish but turn brown with age, and the stem is greyish-brown with a silky white covering. Flesh is pallid with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows up to 8cm across and 8cm tall.
Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland soil, September to December.

Uses A good addition to other mixed mushroom dishes such as casseroles, stews or risottos. Best preserved by drying.

St George's Mushroom

Calocybe gambosa

Description A smooth, convex to flattish cap with a wavy margin, the colour varying from white to pale buff. Gills are whitish and crowded, and the stem is white and smooth. Flesh is thick and white with a strong mealy smell and flavour. Grows up to 15cm wide and 7cm tall.
Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in chalky pastures, woodlands and hedgerows, April to June.
Uses A delicious species to eat on its own, fried with a little butter and garlic. Alternatively, add to chicken pies and fish dishes for extra flavour and texture. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Trooping Funnel

Infundibulicybe geotropa

Description A convex, yellowish-buff cap when young that becomes funnel-shaped and flesh-coloured with age. Gills run down onto the stem (both are a slightly paler colour than the cap). Flesh is thick, white and firm with no distinctive flavour and a mealy odour. Grows up to 20cm wide and 15cm tall.

Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in grassy woodland clearings, August to November.

Uses A good mushroom to cook alone with plenty of butter and onions, or try adding to a beef risotto with rosemary, asparagus and white wine. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Aniseed Funnel

Clitocybe odora

Description A blue-green cap that flattens and whitens with age. The gills are paler than the cap and run down the stem, which is covered in white, fibrous down. Flesh is tough and whitish with a strong odour and taste of aniseed. Grows 3–8cm across and 3–6cm tall.

Distribution Fairly common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in broadleaf woodland, August to December.

Uses With its strong aniseed flavour, this species is too strong to eat on its own, but can be finely chopped and added sparingly to salads, soups, stews and casseroles. Try sautéing into a risotto with leeks and white wine. Best preserved by drying and grinding into a powder.

Fragrant Funnel
Clitocybe fragrans

Description When wet the cap is flattish and yellowish-brown, drying to cream with a darker centre. Gills are whitish-buff and run down the stem, which is the same colour as the cap and slightly woolly at the base. Flesh is thin and white with a strong aniseed odour but no distinctive flavour. Grows up to 4cm wide and 3–6cm tall.
Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in broadleaf woodland, August to December.
Uses Distinguishable from similar poisonous species by its strong aniseed odour. A good addition to omelettes and other mixed mushroom dishes. Best preserved by drying.

Velvet Shank

Flammulina velutipes

Description A flat, slimy, light orange cap that darkens towards the centre. The gills are pale yellow and the stem is tough, velvety and chocolate-brown. Flesh is yellow on the cap and dark brown on the stem, with a pleasant odour and flavour. Grows up to 10cm across and 10cm tall.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on decaying broadleaf trees, October to February.

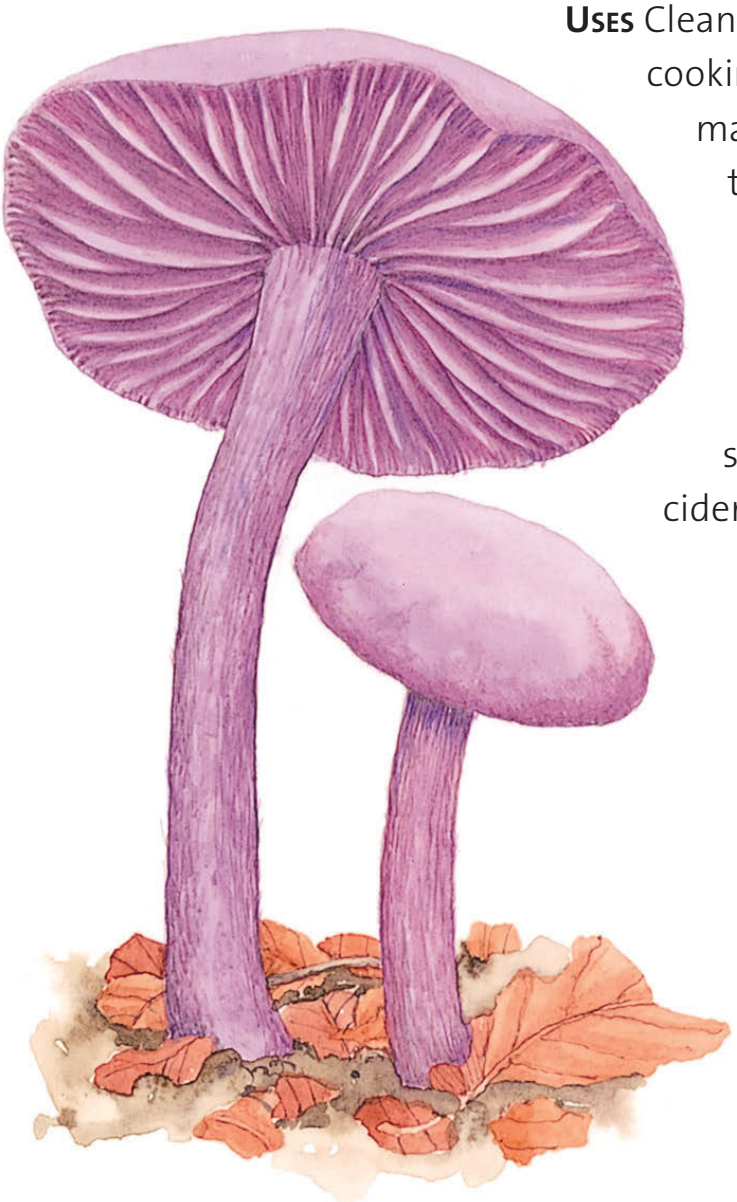
Uses Remove tough stems and slice the cap before adding to soups, stews, risottos and casseroles. They pair well with garlic and winter herbs, like rosemary and thyme. Best preserved by drying and grinding into a powder.

Amethyst Deceiver

Laccaria amethystina

Description A deep purplish-lilac cap with thin, pale lilac flesh, convex at first but flattening and then concaving with age. Gills and stem are the same colour as the cap, the latter covered in whitish to lilac fibres. Flesh is tough and fibrous with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows up to 6cm across and 4–10cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland soil, June to December.



Uses Clean gills thoroughly before cooking. Their earthy flavour make them a good addition to meat and fish dishes, omelettes, quiches, stir-fries, soups, stews and casseroles. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Deceiver

Laccaria laccata

Description Fruiting body varies in appearance when wet or dry. When wet, the cap is a bright, striped reddish-brown, drying to a pale buff brown without stripes. Cap is convex when young, flattening and then concaving with age. Gills are the same colour as the cap. The stem may be more orangey, often twisted and covered in white fibres. Flesh is tough and fibrous with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows up to 6cm across and 5–10cm tall.

Distribution Common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland soil, July to December.

Uses Clean gills thoroughly before cooking. Their earthy flavour make them a good addition to meat and fish dishes, omelettes, quiches, stir-fries, soups, stews and casseroles. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Giant Funnel

Leucopaxillus giganteus

Description A white, funnel-shaped cap, which is often cracked or scaly. Gills are white and crowded together. The stem is stout and white with a bulbous base. Flesh is white and firm with a sweet odour and no distinctive flavour. Grows up to 40cm across and 4–7cm tall.

Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in pastures, hedgerows and woodland clearings, July to September.

Uses The taste is unremarkable but it makes a good bulking addition to other dishes like casseroles, soups, stews and risottos. Cut and boil specimens to soften first. Does not preserve well.

Fairy Ring Champignon

Marasmius oreades

Description Often grows in rings on pastures and lawns. The cap is tan-coloured that dries to a buff colour with a darker centre, bell-shaped when young and becoming umbonate with age. Gills are whitish when young, becoming buff with age. The stem is the same colour as the cap and the flesh is firm and white with an odour of hay and a nutty flavour. Grows 2–5cm wide and up to 10cm tall.

Distribution Widespread and common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in short pastures, May to November.

Uses Best used fresh, they make a good addition to meat, fish and mixed mushroom dishes. Try sautéing into pasta with chives, fresh cream and white wine. Caps are best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Grey Knight
Tricholoma terreum

Description The cap is dark grey with a fibrous, felty surface, bell-shaped when young before becoming umbonate with age. The gills are greyish-white and the stem is white and smooth. Flesh is greyish-white with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows 4–7cm across and 3–8cm tall.

Distribution Fairly common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in chalky woodland soil, September to December.

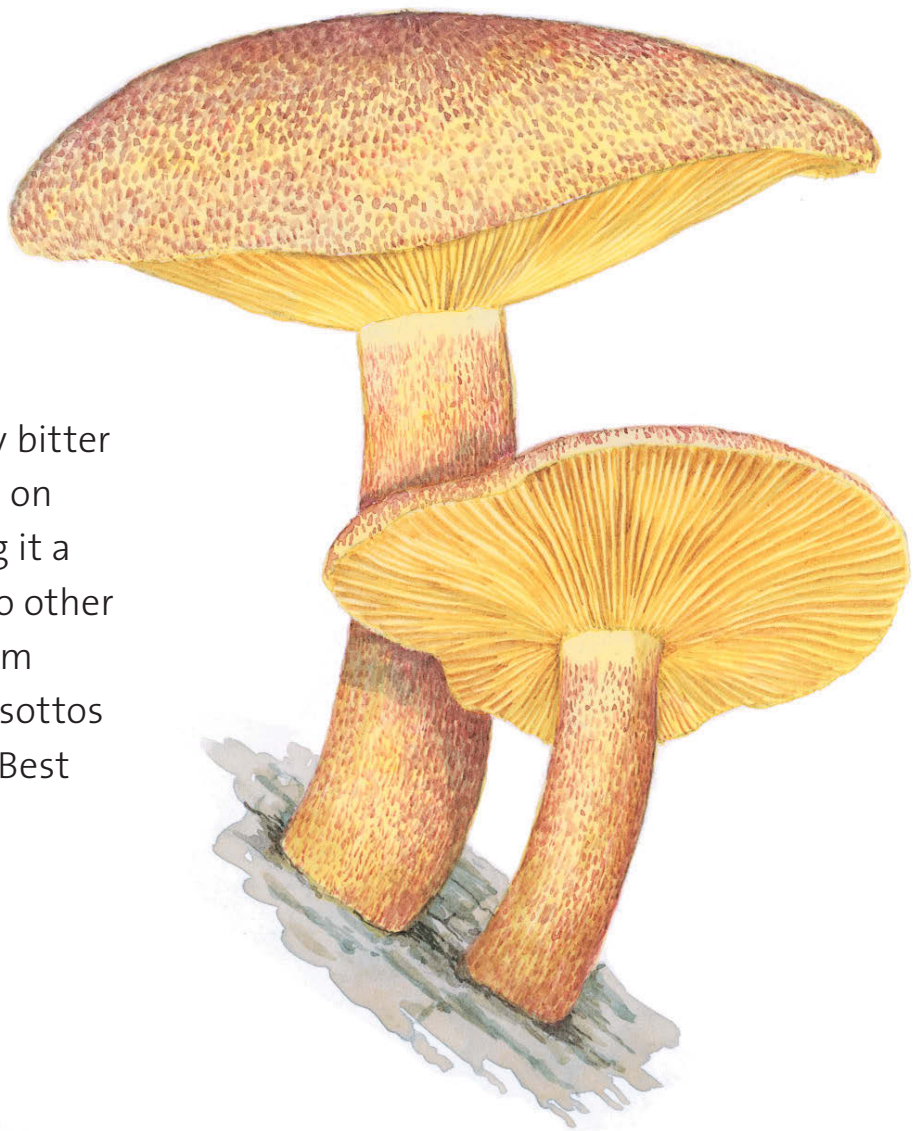
Uses Enjoyable fried alone with a little butter and garlic, or try adding to meat and fish dishes for extra texture and flavour, particularly pies and stews. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Plums and Custard

Tricholomopsis rutilans

Description The cap is yellow and covered in reddish-purple scales, which are more densely clustered in the centre. Bell-shaped when young but flattening with age. The gills are sulphur-yellow and the stem matches the cap, although less scaley. Flesh is pale yellow with a musty odour and a slightly bitter taste. Grows up to 12cm across and 5.5cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows around coniferous tree stumps, August to December.

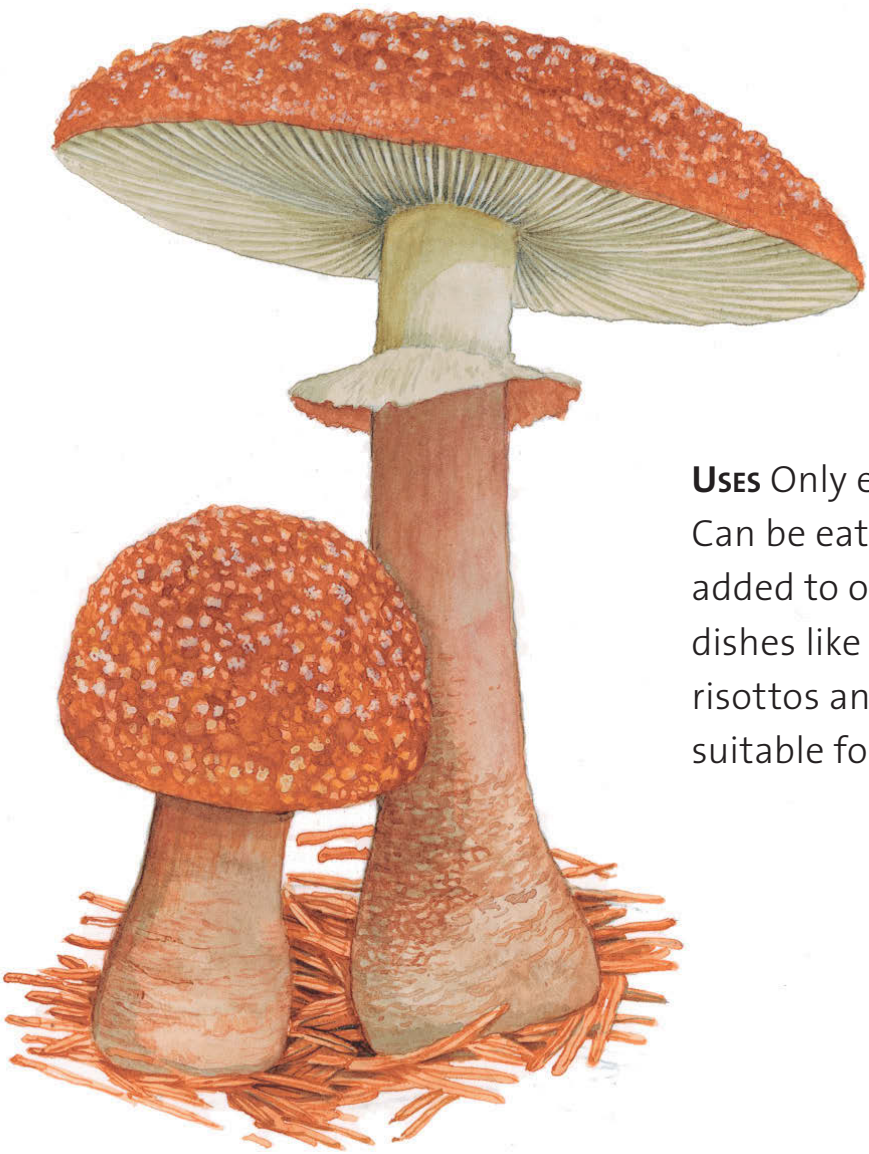


Uses The slightly bitter taste is reduced on cooking, making it a good addition to other mixed mushroom dishes, stews, risottos and casseroles. Best eaten fresh.

Blusher

Amanita rubescens

Description A reddish-brown cap covered with greyish scales, hemispherical when young but flattening or becoming convex with age. Gills are white with pink patches when damaged, and the stem is white at the top and reddish-brown at the bottom. Flesh is white, turning reddish when bruised. Grows up to 15cm across and 6–14cm tall.
Distribution Common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland soil, August to November.

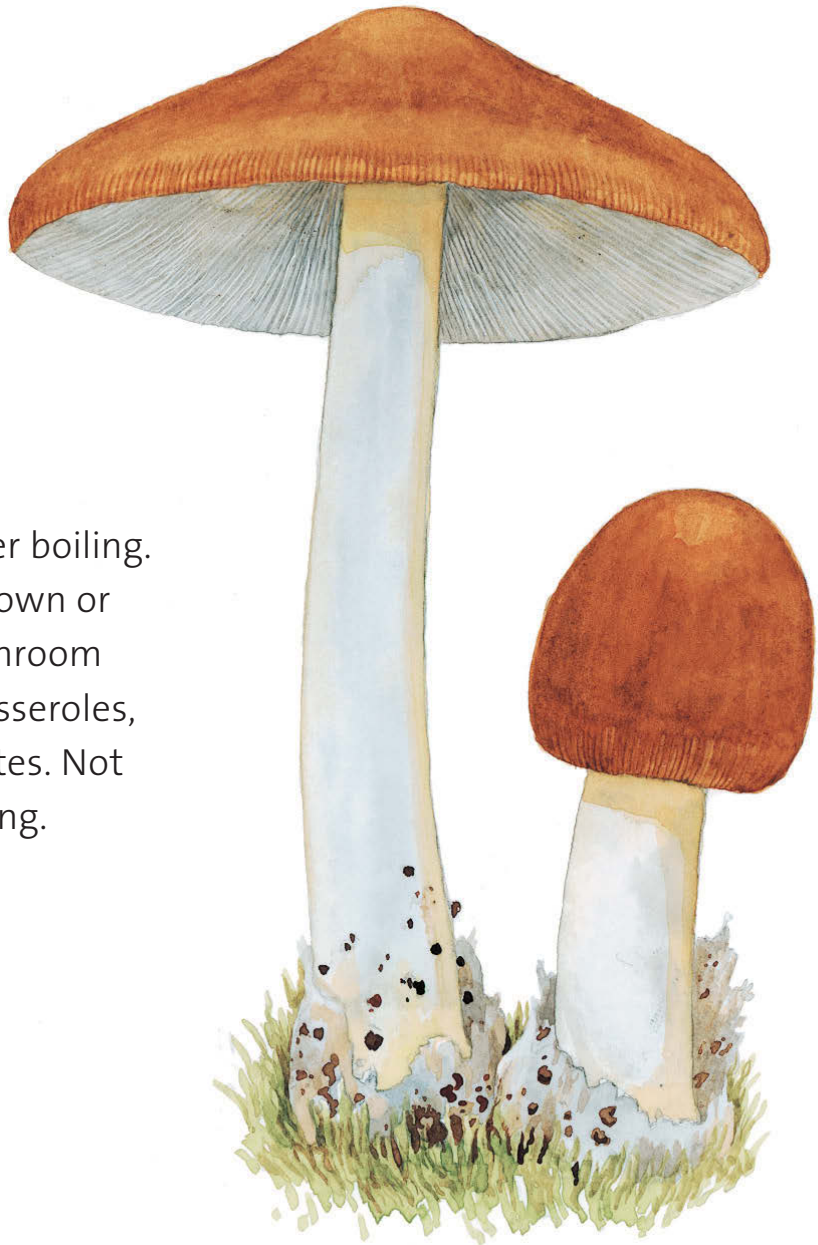


Uses Only edible after boiling. Can be eaten on its own or added to other mushroom dishes like stews, casseroles, risottos and omelettes. Not suitable for preserving.

Tawny Grisette
Amanita fulva

Description Fruiting body has an orange-brown, bell-shaped cap that becomes umbonate with age. The gills and stem are white, and the flesh is thin and white with no distinctive odour or taste. Grows 4–9cm across and 7–12cm tall.

Distribution Common and widely distributed throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland soil, August to October.



Uses Only edible after boiling. Can be eaten on its own or added to other mushroom dishes like stews, casseroles, risottos and omelettes. Not suitable for preserving.

Slender Parasol

Macrolepiota mastoidea

Description The cap is white with a brown, scaly centre, globular when young but becoming umbonate with age. The gills and stem are white, the latter covered in small, brownish scales. Stem also has a swollen base and a large, white ring. Flesh is creamy to pale brownish with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows 7–15cm across and 8–15cm tall.

Distribution Widely distributed but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in pastures and cultivated land, August to November.

Uses A good addition to other mixed mushroom dishes such as soups, casseroles, risottos and stews. Try adding to a puff pastry pie with chicken, tarragon and white wine. Avoid using the tough stem. Best preserved by drying.

Parasol

Macrolepiota procera

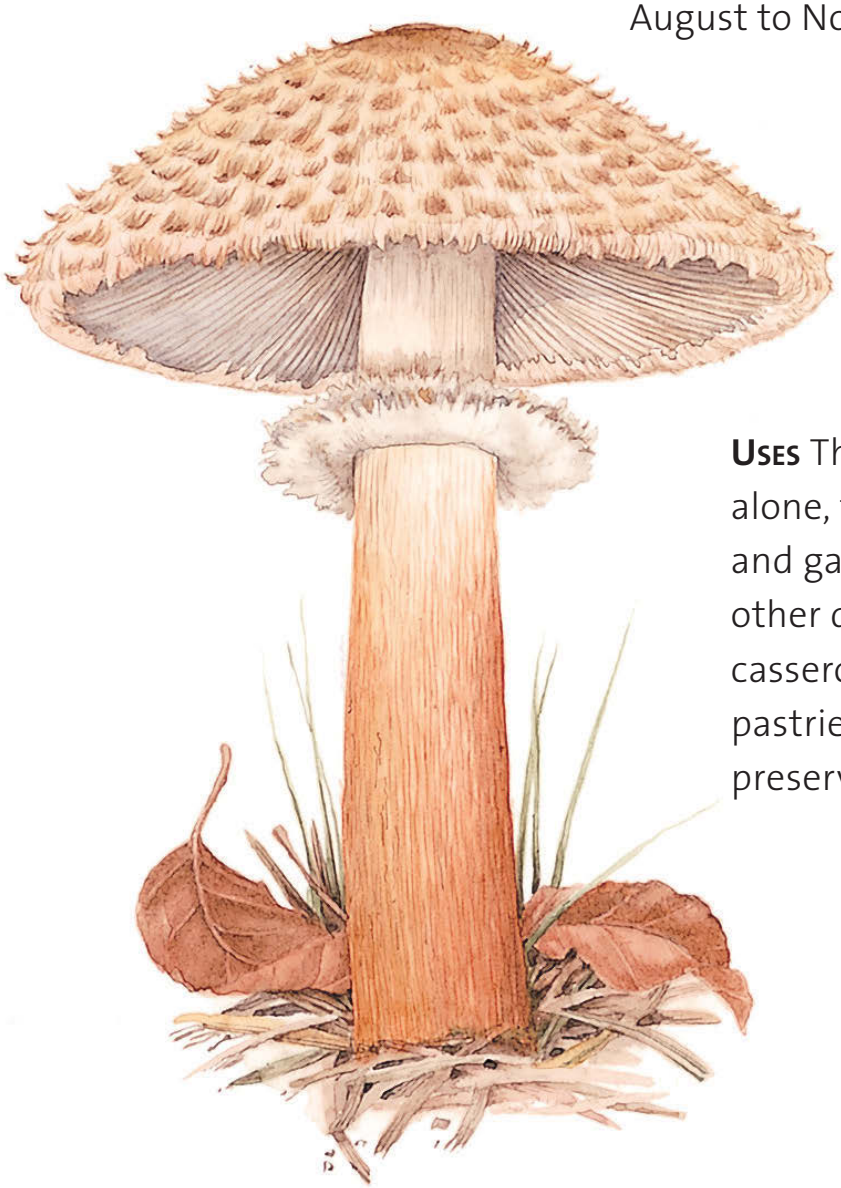
Description A scaly, pallid brown, maraca-shaped cap when young that expands to umbonate with age. The gills are white and the stem is grey-brown with a swollen base and a snakeskin pattern of scales below a two-tiered ring. Flesh is white, soft and thin with no distinctive odour and a sweet flavour. Grows 10–25cm across and 15–20cm tall.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe but with an uneven distribution. Grows in grassy areas and woodlands, August to November.

Uses The caps are delicious and can be eaten alone, fried with butter and garlic, or added to other dishes like soups, casseroles, risottos, stews, pastries and curries. Best preserved by drying.

Shaggy Parasol
Chlorophyllum rhacodes

Description An egg-shaped cap when young that flattens with age. Cap is pale buff to cinnamon-brown with fibrous, shaggy scales revealing white flesh underneath. Gills and stem are white, the latter tinged pinkish-brown. Flesh is thick and white, reddening in the stem when damaged. Grows 10–15cm across and 10–15cm tall.
Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe but with an uneven distribution. Grows in woodlands and hedgerows, August to November.



Uses The caps can be eaten alone, fried with butter and garlic, or added to other dishes like soups, casseroles, risottos, stews, pastries and curries. Best preserved by drying.

Deer Shield
Pluteus cervinus

Description Fruiting body has a convex to flattened cap that is dark brown, smooth and sticky when moist. The gills are whitish at first, becoming pink with age, and the stem is smooth and whitish with dark fibres. Flesh is whitish and firm with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows 4–12cm across and 7–10cm tall.
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on broadleaf stumps and debris, April to December.

Uses When collected in large numbers, it makes a good bulking ingredient in other mushroom dishes for extra texture and substance, although the flavour is generally unimpressive. Not suitable for preserving.

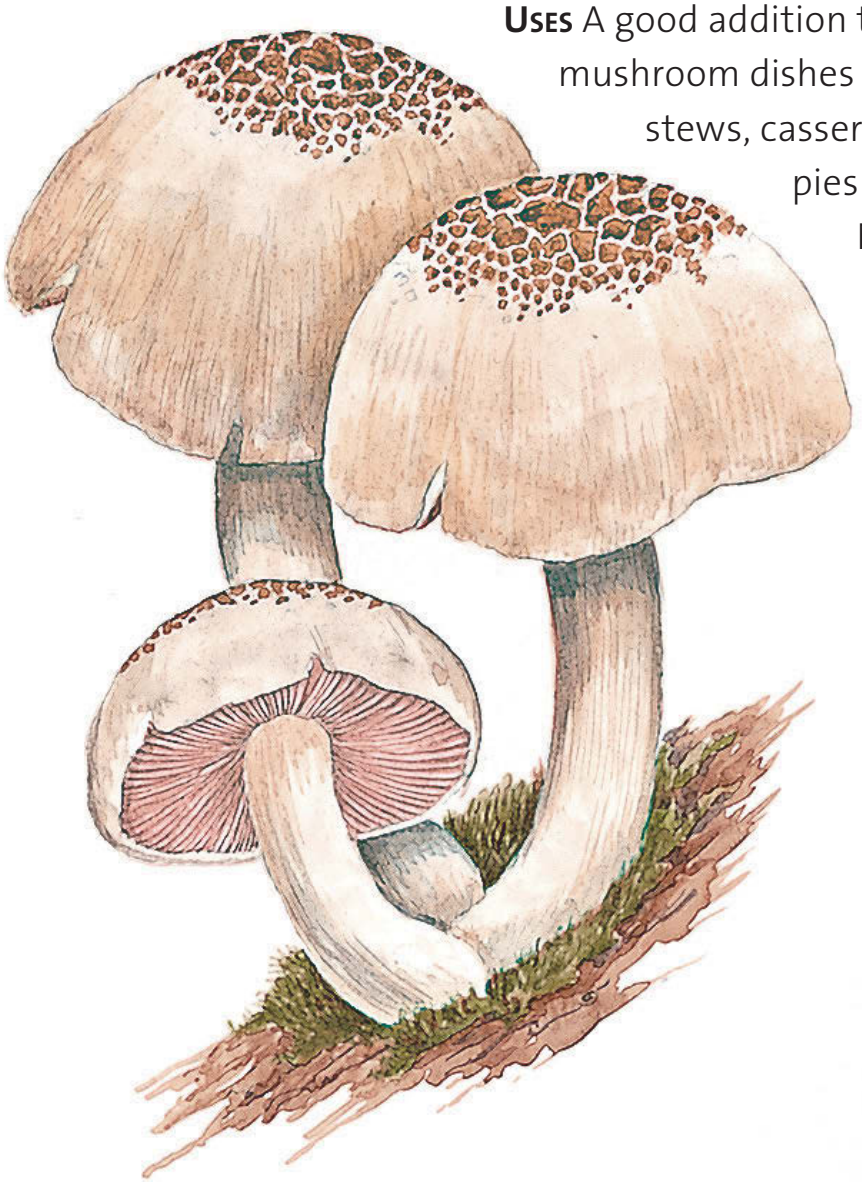
Scaly Shield

Pluteus petasatus

Description The cap is whitish and convex with dark brown scales concentrated at the centre. The gills start white and turn pink and the stem is thick and white with brown or blackish fibres at the base. The flesh is white and soft with an odour of radishes and a fruity flavour. Grows 4–15cm across and up to 15cm tall.

Distribution Widespread in Britain and Europe but nowhere common. Grows on broadleaf stumps and debris, June to November.

Uses A good addition to other mixed mushroom dishes such as soups, stews, casseroles, risottos, pies and curries. Not suitable for preserving.



Stubble Rosegill

Volvariella gloiocephala

Description Cap is white with a pale brown centre, oval-shaped when young but flattening with maturity. Gills are white and become pink with age, and the stem is white, smooth and tapered, arising from a white, sac-like volva. The flesh is white and firm with an earthy odour and no distinctive flavour. Grows 7–14cm across and up to 10cm tall.
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on compost heaps and stubble fields, July to December.

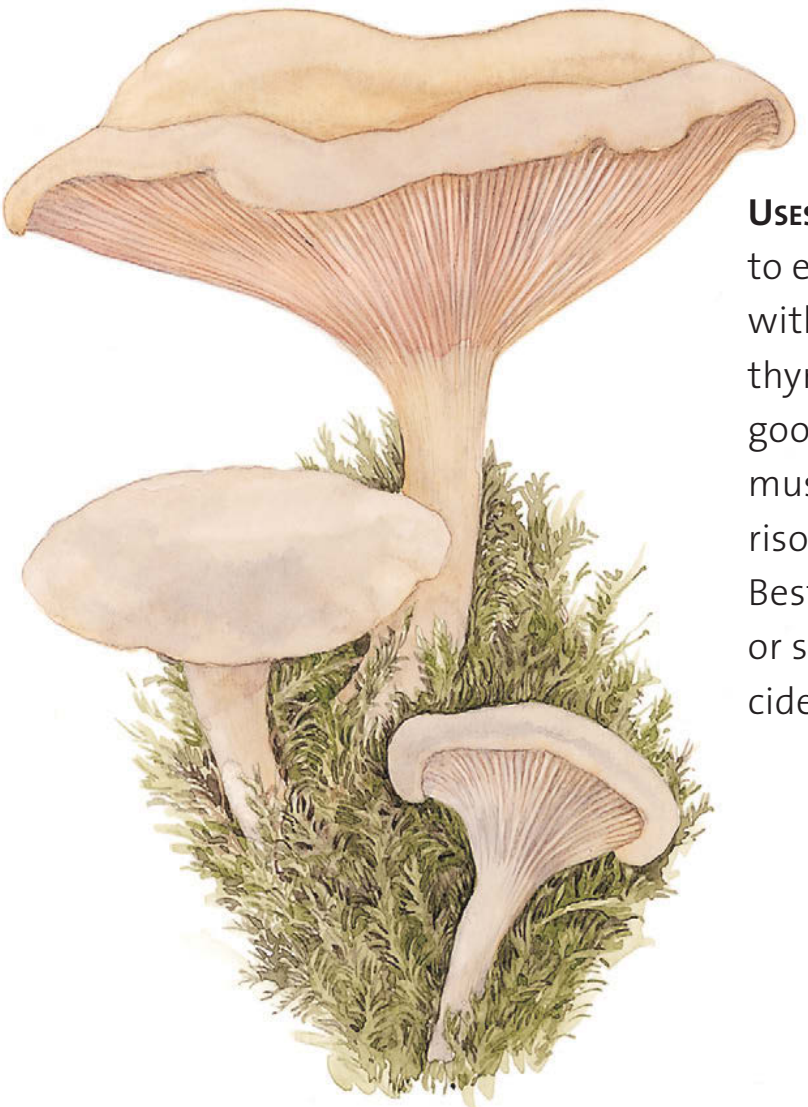
Uses Use only mature specimens. If an abundance can be found, this species makes a delicious mushroom soup, or try combining with chives in an omelette. Not suitable for preserving.

The Miller

Clitopilus prunulus

Description The fruiting body is white, soft and velvety, convex when young but flattening with a depressed centre as it matures. The gills are white at first before turning pale pink, and the stem is white and covered in fine down. The flesh is firm and white with a strong cucumber aroma and a mealy taste. Grows up to 8cm across and 5cm tall.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe but with an uneven distribution. Grows in rich, grassy woodland, July to November.



Uses A delicious species to eat on its own or fried with butter and a little thyme. It also makes a good addition to mixed mushroom dishes, stews, risottos and casseroles. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Wood Blewit

Lepista nuda

Description A large fruiting body with a lilac-grey cap that turns brownish when dry, convex when young but flattening with age. The gills are bright lilac, turning buff with age, and the stem is bright violet and thicker at the base. Flesh is bluish-lilac with a strong aroma and flavour. Grows 6–12cm across and 5–9cm tall.

Distribution Common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland soil, September to December.

Uses An excellent addition to meat and fish dishes due to its strong flavour. Try combining with mascarpone and fresh sage in an autumn risotto. Avoid picking in wet weather, as they are porous and will absorb rainwater, which will then dilute your cooking. Preserve in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Field Blewit

Lepista saeva

Description A pale, brownish fruiting cap that flattens with age. Gills are pinkish and the stem is bluish-lilac, which gives it the alternative name Blue Leg. Thick, whitish flesh with a strong mealy odour and taste. Grows 6–12cm across and 3–6cm tall.

Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in grassy areas, October to December.

Uses A good addition to meat and fish dishes due to its substantial texture. Avoid picking in wet weather, as they are porous and will absorb rainwater, which will then dilute your cooking. Preserve in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Field Mushroom

Agaricus campestris

Description The cap is smooth, white or cream-coloured, convex to flattened and slightly scaly with age. The gills are deep pink when young, turning chocolate-brown to black as they mature, and the stem is short, smooth at the top and scaly near the bottom. Flesh is pinkish white with a pleasant odour and earthy taste. Grows up to 8cm across and 10cm tall.

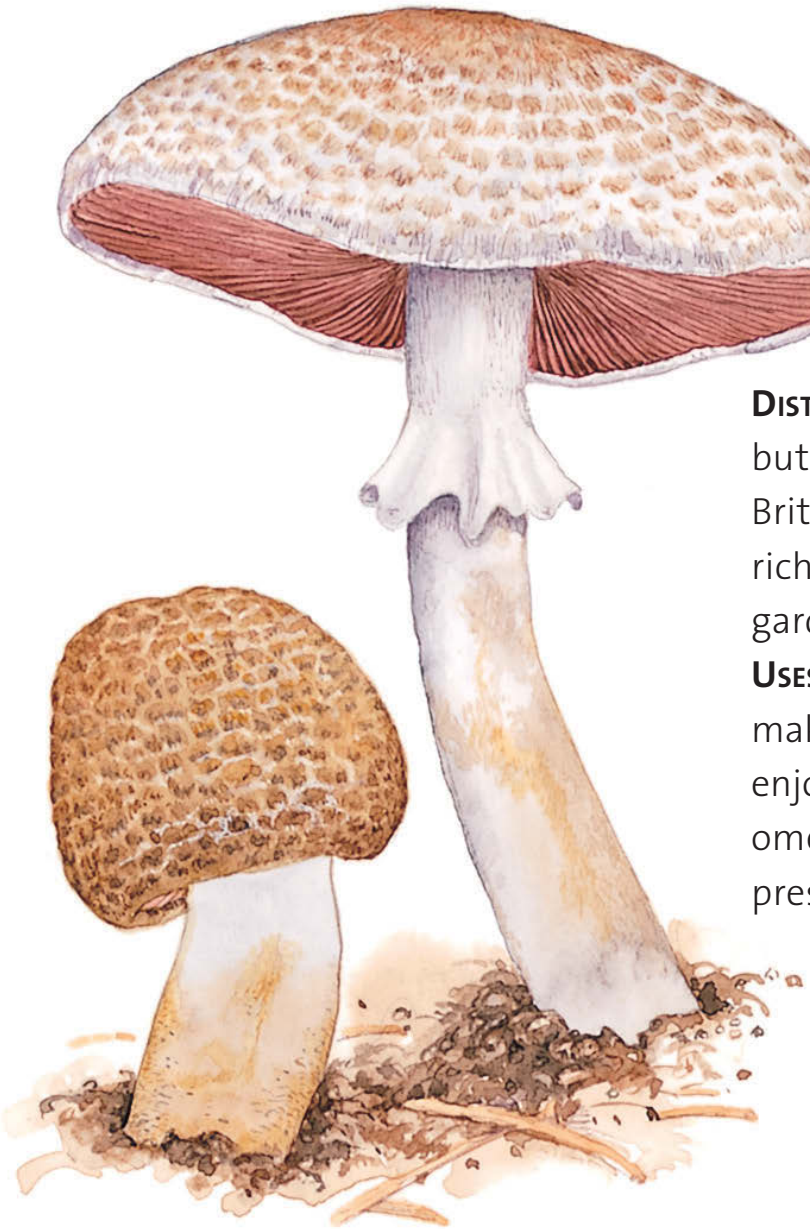
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in chalky meadows and pastures, July to November.

Uses Best gathered early in the morning. Delicious on its own, fried with butter and garlic, or mixed into meat, fish or other mushroom dishes. A good addition to mushroom soups. Best preserved by drying.

The Prince

Agaricus augustus

Description The fruiting body is ovoid at first, becoming convex with a flattened centre as it matures. Cap is chestnut-brown to yellowish with fibrous scales. Gills are pale pink when young, turning chocolate-brown to black as they mature. Stem is white and scaly with a skirt-like ring. Flesh is yellowish-white with a strong odour of bitter almonds and a strong flavour. Grows 10–25cm across and 10–20cm tall.



Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in rich woodlands, hedges and gardens, August to October.

Uses The flavour is intense, making it a good species to enjoy on its own, or add to omelettes and quiches. Best preserved by drying.

Horse Mushroom

Agaricus arvensis

Description The cap is smooth and whitish-yellow or cream, egg-shaped at first but flattening with age. The gills are pinkish-white, maturing to chocolate-brown. The stem is smooth and whitish-yellow with a double-layered ring that splits into a 'cogwheel' shape. Flesh is thick, firm and white with a strong aniseed odour and no distinctive taste. Grows 6–20cm across and 7–12cm tall.

Distribution Widespread but unevenly distributed throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in pasture where horses graze, June to November.

Uses Best picked early in the morning. Good to eat on its own, fried or sautéed with butter, or added to soups, stews, casseroles, risottos and pies. Best preserved by drying.

Macro Mushroom

Agaricus urinascens

Description The cap is whitish, scaled and deeply domed, eventually expanding to become convex. The gills are whitish-grey at first, turning pink then dark brown with age. The stem is creamy white, the lower half covered in scales. The flesh is firm and white with an odour of almonds and a strong flavour. Grows up to 30cm across and 12cm tall.

Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in chalky pasture, June to September.

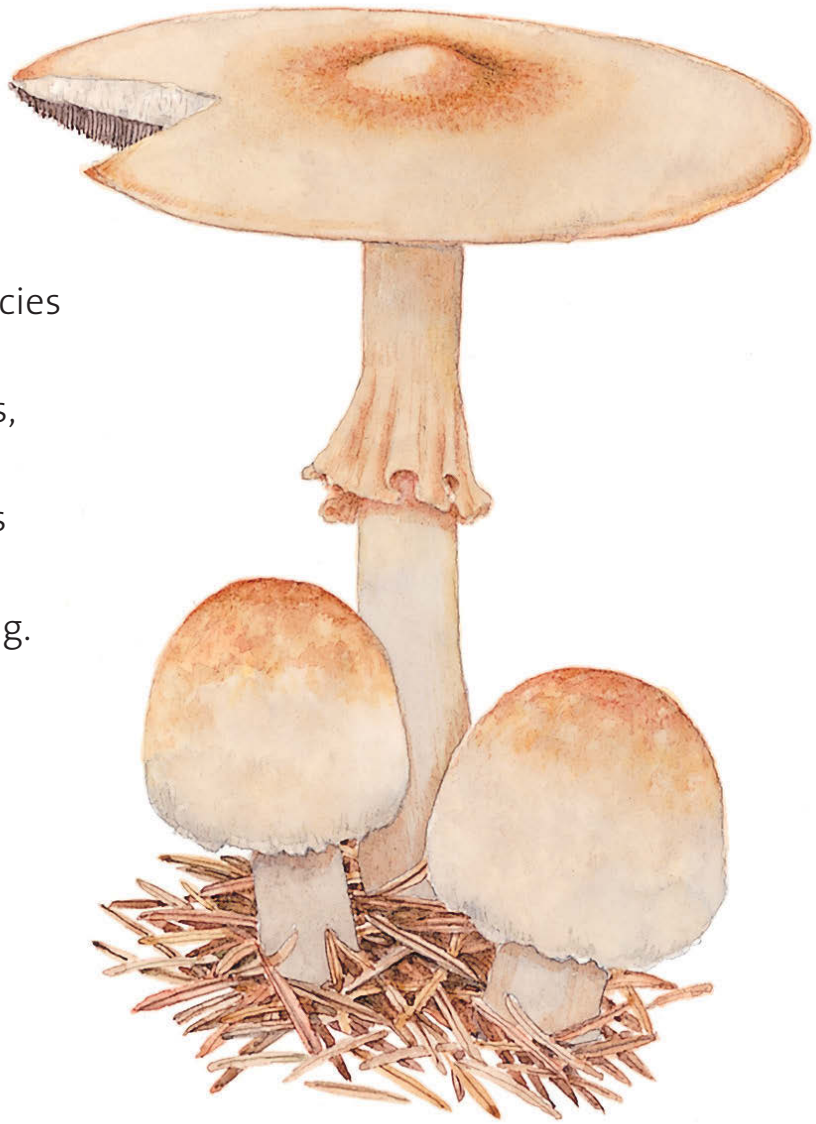
Uses The thick flesh and stem have a strong, sharp flavour that makes this species delicious as a meal on its own, fried with butter and garlic, or added to other dishes. Best preserved by drying.

Wood Mushroom

Agaricus silvicola

Description A cream-coloured cap that grows egg-shaped before flattening with age. The gills are pinkish-grey but turn chocolate-brown to black as they mature. The stem is smooth and creamy with a bulbous base and a skirt-like ring. The flesh is white with a strong aniseed odour and no distinctive flavour. Grows 5–10cm across and 5–8cm tall.

Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland soil, September to November.



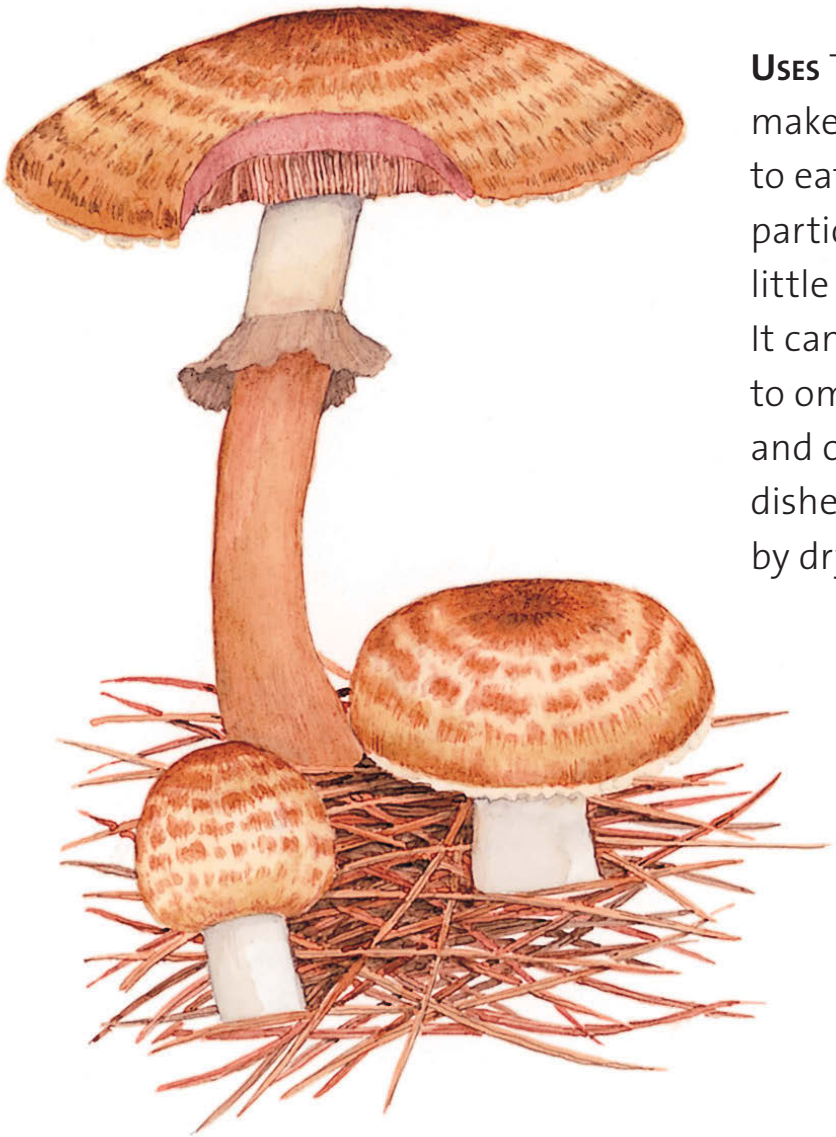
Uses An excellent species to enjoy on its own, or add to meat dishes, omelettes, quiches, soups, stews, risottos and casseroles. Not suitable for preserving.

Blushing Wood Mushroom

Agaricus silvaticus

Description A brownish, button-like cap covered in a pattern of flaky, fibrous scales. Gills are pale pink when young, maturing to reddish then chocolate-brown. The stem is whitish with a brown ring, scales and a bulbous base. Flesh is firm and white, becoming red and then dark brown when cut, with no distinctive odour but a strong flavour. Grows 5–10cm across and 5–8cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in rich, coniferous woodland, August to November.



Uses The strong flavour makes it a good species to eat on its own, particularly fried in a little butter with garlic. It can also be added to omelettes, quiches and other mushroom dishes. Best preserved by drying.

Pavement Mushroom

Agaricus bitorquis

Description A pale, greyish-brown cap that is convex to flattish. Gills are dull pink when young, becoming clay-coloured then chocolate brown as they mature. The stem is thick, white and smooth with two separate rings. The flesh is whitish-pink with a sour odour and no distinctive flavour. Grows 4–10cm across and 3–6cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on sandy soil and compacted ground, May to November.

Uses It develops a strong flavour when cooked and can be enjoyed on its own or added to other mushroom dishes, soups, stews, casseroles, risottos and pies. Best preserved by drying.

Common Inkcap

Coprinopsis atramentaria

Description Cap is greyish-brown with a rusty brown centre, oval-shaped when young but becoming bell-shaped with age. Gills grow white then grey, becoming black and liquified as they mature. The stem is white, smooth and often stained with the liquified gills. Flesh is thin and white with a faint odour and no distinctive flavour. Grows 3–7cm across and 7–14cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in fields, gardens and wasteland, June to December.

Uses This mushroom is only edible provided no alcohol has been consumed within the last 48 hours. Young specimens can be added to omelettes and quiches. Best eaten fresh as it decomposes rapidly.

Shaggy Inkcap
Coprinus comatus

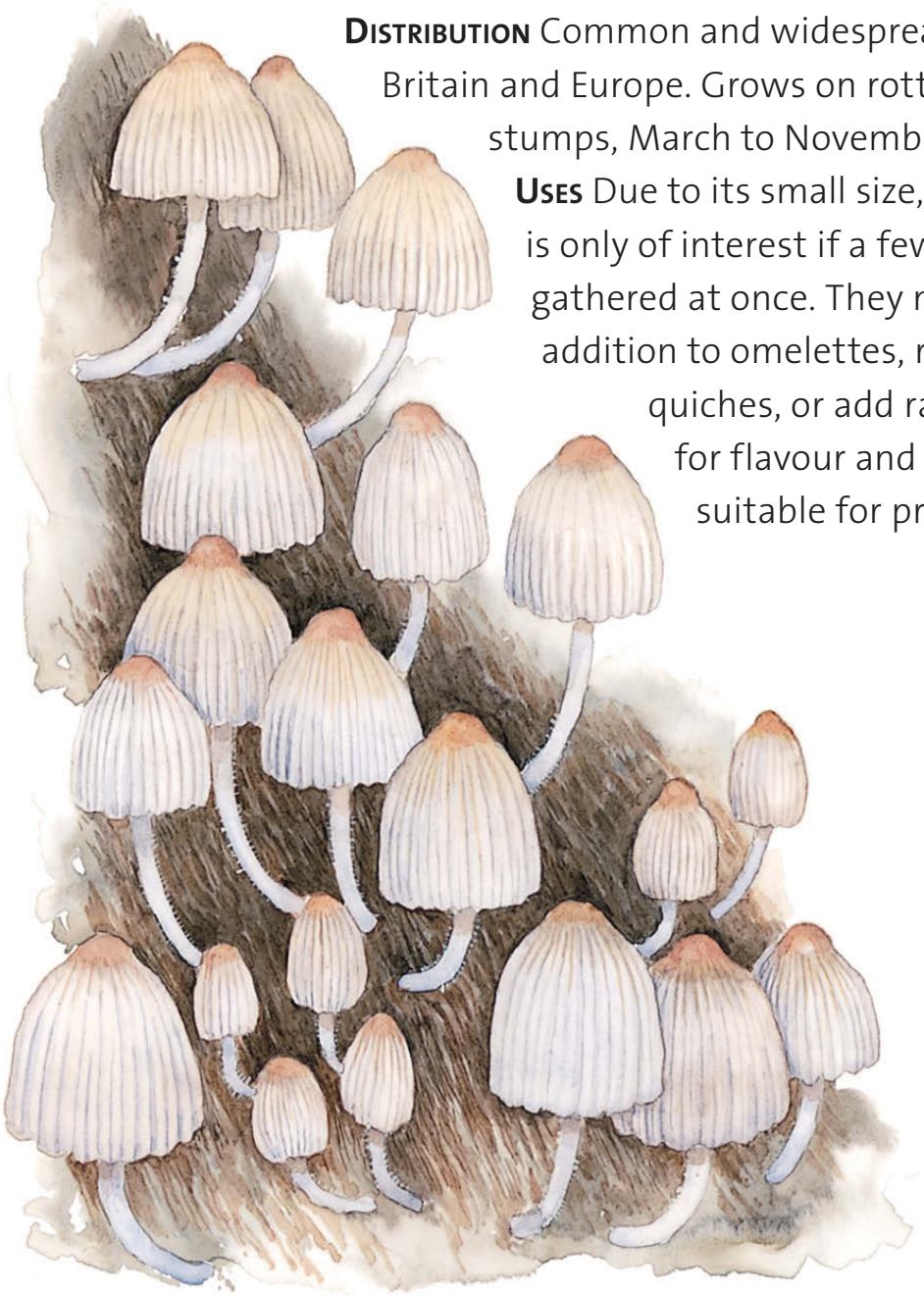
Description A bell-shaped, almost cylindrical cap, white with a brown top and covered in large, brownish scales. Gills grow white then pink, becoming black and liquified as they mature. Stem is white and brittle with a movable ring. The flesh is thin and white with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows 10–30cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on grass verges, fallow fields and compost heaps, April to November.

Uses Choose younger specimens without blackened gills. Use raw in salads or lightly sauté and add to chicken or fish dishes like shortcrust or potato pies. Preserve by rapid drying only.

Fairy Inkcap
Coprinellus disseminatus

Description A small fruiting body with a yellowish-brown, bell-shaped cap that becomes grey and convex with age. Gills are white when young, turning grey and then black. The stem is white and downy, and the flesh is white with no distinctive odour or taste. Grows up to 4cm tall.



Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on rotting broadleaf stumps, March to November.

Uses Due to its small size, this species is only of interest if a few can be gathered at once. They make a good addition to omelettes, risottos and quiches, or add raw to salads for flavour and texture. Not suitable for preserving.

Glistening Inkcap

Coprinellus micaceus

Description Cap is tawny brown and covered in glistening particles when young, becoming bell-shaped with age. Gills turn from pale brown to black and liquefied. Stem is white and smooth. Flesh is pale with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows 2–4cm across and 5–8cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on broadleaf stumps, May to December.

Uses Young specimens make a good addition to omelettes and quiches when lightly sautéed. Not recommended to eat raw or preserve as it decomposes quickly.

Sheathed Woodtuft

Kuehneromyces mutabilis

Description The cap is smooth and tan-coloured when wet, drying out to a pale, ochre yellow. It is convex when young and expands to flattish umbonate. Gills are pale ochre to cinnamon-brown, and the stem is smooth and pale tan with a brown ring and dark scales. Flesh is cinnamon-brown with no distinctive odour but a strong taste. Grows up to 8cm across and 10cm tall.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and northern Europe. Grows on broadleaf stumps and logs, June to November.

Uses Not recommended to eat raw due to its strong flavour, but makes a good addition to chicken and seafood dishes. Try pan-frying with fresh cod, garlic butter and parsley. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Conifer Tuft

Hypholoma capnoides

Description A pale, convex, yellow-ochre cap that flattens with age. Gills are bluish-grey to purplish-brown, and the stem is yellowish-buff with a darker brownish base. The flesh is yellow with a sweetish taste and no distinctive odour. Grows up to 8cm across and 10cm tall.

Distribution Uncommon, with a northerly distribution in Britain and Europe. Grows on conifer stumps, May to November.

Uses If collected in abundance, it makes a good addition to other mushroom dishes, soups, stews and casseroles. Best preserved by drying.

Curry Milkcap

Lactarius camphoratus

Description A reddish-brown cap that is convex at first, becoming flatter and slightly funnel-shaped with age. Gills are pale reddish-brown and the stem is cylindrical and the same colour as the cap. The flesh is pale rusty brown with a mild taste, releasing a watery white latex when cut and a faint, unpleasant aroma when fresh, drying to resemble strong curry spices. Grows to 5cm across and 5cm tall.

Distribution Widespread and common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in coniferous woodland soil, July to October.

Uses The flavour is best when dried and ground to a powder to be used as an aromatic condiment, or stored in olive oil.

Saffron Milkcap

Lactarius deliciosus

Description A reddish-orange cap that is convex at first but becomes funnel-shaped with age. Gills are orange-yellow with a green bruise, and the stem is reddish-orange with salmon-pink blotches. The flesh is thick, firm and creamy yellow, releasing a saffron-coloured latex when cut. The odour is fruity and the taste is slightly bitter. Grows to 20cm across and 6–8cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in coniferous woodland soil, August to November.

Uses Young, brightly coloured specimens make a good addition to meat and fish dishes, or sauté alone with butter and garlic. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Coconut Milkcap

Lactarius glyciosmus

Description The cap is greyish-lilac and convex at first, becoming flattened and umbonate with age. Gills are pinkish-buff and the stem is greyish-lilac, bruising brown. Flesh is firm and white with a strong odour of coconut oil, releasing a white latex that has a mild taste at first but becomes hot. Grows 2–6cm across and 4–7cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in damp soil under birch, August to November.

Uses A good addition to mixed mushroom dishes, omelettes and white fish dishes. Try sautéing into a lemon sauce with parsley and silver hake. Best preserved in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Mild Milkcap

Lactarius subdulcis

Description A cinnamon-brown cap that grows convex at first, becoming flatter with age. The gills are pinkish and the stem is cinnamon-brown and cylindrical. Flesh is thin and white, releasing a white latex with an oily odour and a slightly bitter flavour. Grows 3–7cm across and 3–7cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in broadleaf woodland soil, July to December.

Uses If enough specimens can be found, they make a good addition to mushroom and fish dishes and shortcrust pies, particularly with chicken and tarragon. Best preserved by drying.

Charcoal Burner

Russula cyanoxantha

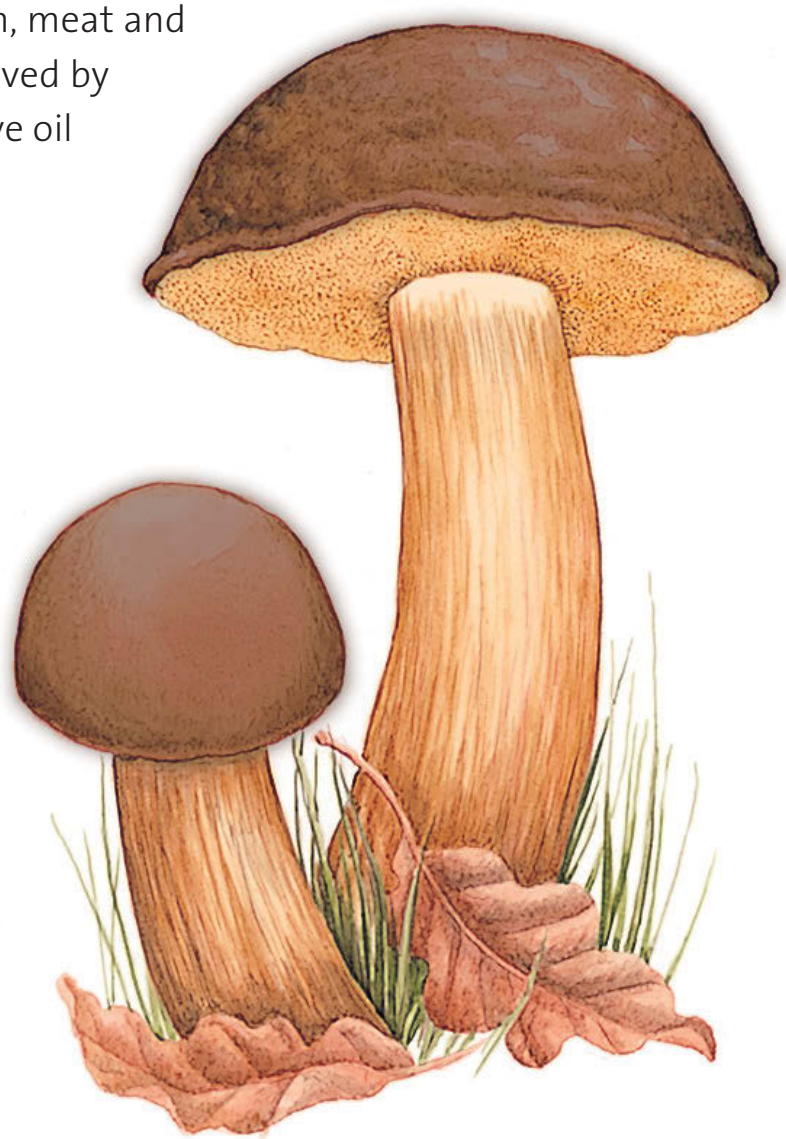
Description The fruiting body has a convex cap when young that flattens with maturity. The colour ranges from purple to olive, green and brown. Gills are pale cream and the stem is smooth and white, occasionally tinged purple. The flesh is firm and white with no distinctive odour and a mild flavour. Grows 5–15cm across and 5–10cm tall.

Distribution Widespread and common throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in broadleaf woodland soil, June to December.

Uses A good species to eat on its own, sautéed with butter and herbs, or add to meat and fish dishes like casseroles, pies, stews and risottos. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Bay Bolete
Boletus badius

Description The cap is convex, smooth, shiny and chocolate-brown with large lemon-yellow pores that bruise bluish-green. Pale yellow tubes are attached to the stem, which is stout and paler than the cap. Flesh is pale yellow but bluish-green when cut, with no distinctive odour or taste. Grows up to 15cm across and 9cm tall.
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in acidic woodland soils, July to November.
Uses A good addition to salads when raw and thinly sliced, it can also be added to mushroom, meat and fish dishes. Best preserved by drying or storing in olive oil or cider vinegar.



Suede Bolete

Boletus subtomentosus

Description An olive-brown convex cap that expands and cracks as it ages, revealing yellow flesh underneath. Pores are large and golden-yellow, the tubes are olive-brown and the stem is yellowish-brown and cylindrical. The flesh is thick, soft and pale yellow. Grows 5–12cm across and 3–8cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland soil, July to November.

Uses Use young specimens in soups, stews, casseroles and other mushroom dishes. Not as tasty on their own. Best preserved by drying.

Red Cracking Bolete

Boletus chrysenteron

Description A dull brown, convex cap that expands and flattens with age, cracking to reveal red flesh underneath. Pores are large and yellowish-blue, the tubes are yellow and blue when cut, and the stem is solid and lemon-yellow with reddish fibres. The flesh is thick, soft and pale yellow with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows 4–11cm across and 4–8cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in broadleaf woodland soil, May to December.

Uses Use young specimens in soups, stews, casseroles and other mushroom dishes. Not as tasty on their own. Best preserved by drying.

Penny Bun / Cep

Boletus edulis

Description A smooth, light brown, bun-shaped cap that darkens as it expands. Slightly sticky when wet. Pores are small and white to olive-yellow, and the tubes are white to greenish-yellow. The stem is stout, bulbous and slightly paler than the cap with white vein-like lines. Flesh is white and firm with no distinctive odour but a nutty taste. Grows 8–10cm across and 6–8cm tall.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe but rarer in the north. Grows in woodland soil, June to November.

Uses Choose the youngest specimens for the freshest, nuttiest flavour. A good addition to stews, risottos and omelettes, or cook into mushroom soup with crème fraîche and tarragon. Best preserved by drying.

Summer Bolete

Boletus reticulatus

Description A cinnamon-coloured, bun-shaped cap with a suede-like texture that cracks when dry. Pores are small and white to olive-green, and tubes are white and greenish-yellow. The stem is pale brown, swollen and bulbous. Flesh is white and firm with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows up to 30cm across and 6–12cm tall.

Distribution Uncommon but widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland soil, June to November.

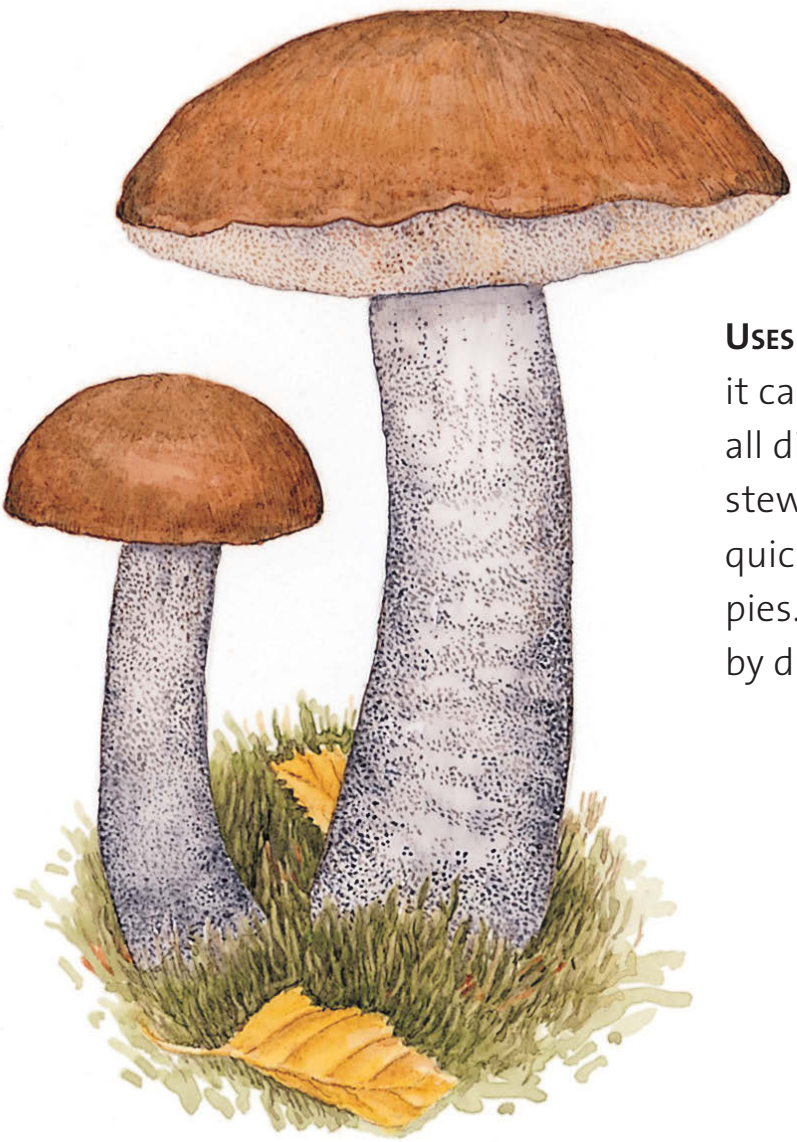
Uses A versatile mushroom, it can be added fresh to all dishes including soups, stews, casseroles, risottos, quiches, omelettes and pies. Best preserved by drying.

Brown Birch Bolete

Leccinum scabrum

Description A yellowish-brown, bun-shaped cap that is velvety when young and smoother with age. Small, greyish pores that bruise yellowish-brown and greyish tubes. The stem is white and cylindrical, and covered with small grey-brown scales. Flesh is thick, soft and white, with an aromatic odour and a slightly sour flavour. Grows 5–15cm across and 6–15cm tall.

Distribution Widespread in Britain and Europe. Grows in birch woodland soil, September to November.



Uses A versatile mushroom, it can be added fresh to all dishes including soups, stews, casseroles, risottos, quiches, omelettes and pies. Best preserved by drying.

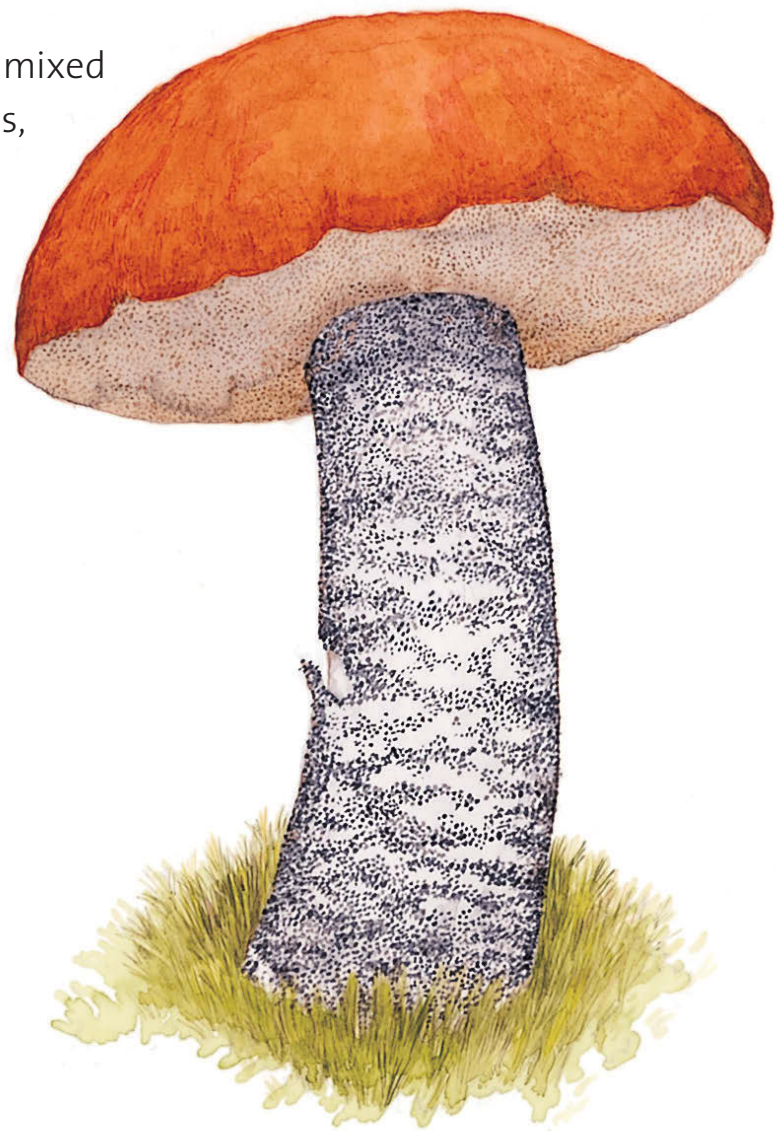
Orange Birch Bolete

Leccinum versipelle

Description An orange to yellowish-brown, bun-shaped cap with a shaggy margin. The pores are small and greyish and the tubes are greyish. Stem is white with a swollen base, covered in small black scales. The flesh is firm and white, turning purplish to black when cut or damaged. A pleasant odour and flavour. Grows 8–15cm across and 10–15cm tall.

Distribution Widespread and unevenly distributed throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in birch woodland soil, scrub and heathland, August to November.

Uses A good addition to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews, risottos and casseroles. Best preserved by drying.



Bovine Bolete

Suillus bovinus

Description A convex, yellowish-brown cap that is sticky and slimy when damp. The pores are large and subdivided into smaller, greenish-yellow pores. Tubes are olive-brown and the stem is yellowish-brown, often tapering at the base. The flesh is thick, soft and yellowish-pink with a fruity odour but no distinctive flavour. Grows up to 10cm across and 4–6cm tall.

Distribution Fairly widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in chalky soil under pines, July to November.

Uses Remove the slimy layer on the cap before cooking and add the remaining flesh to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews, risottos and pies. Not suitable for preserving.

Weeping Bolete
Suillus granulatus

Description A convex, yellow to reddish-brown cap that flattens as it expands, with a sticky surface layer that can be easily removed. The pores are small and pale lemon yellow, releasing droplets of milky fluid that darken when dry. Tubes are yellow and attached to the stem, which is cylindrical and pale yellow with white or yellowish granules near the apex. Flesh is thick and pale yellow with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows 5–15cm across and 5–10cm tall.
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on sandy soil in coniferous woodland, August to November.
Uses Remove the slimy layer on the cap before cooking and add the remaining flesh to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews, risottos and pies. Not suitable for preserving.

Larch Bolete

Suillus grevillei

Description A convex, golden-yellow to rusty-orange cap with a slimy surface layer. Pores are small and lemon-yellow, bruising to reddish-brown. Tubes are short and yellow, and the stem is yellow at the top with brownish-yellow below a slimy white ring. The flesh is thick, soft and pale yellow with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows 5–10cm across and 5–10cm tall.

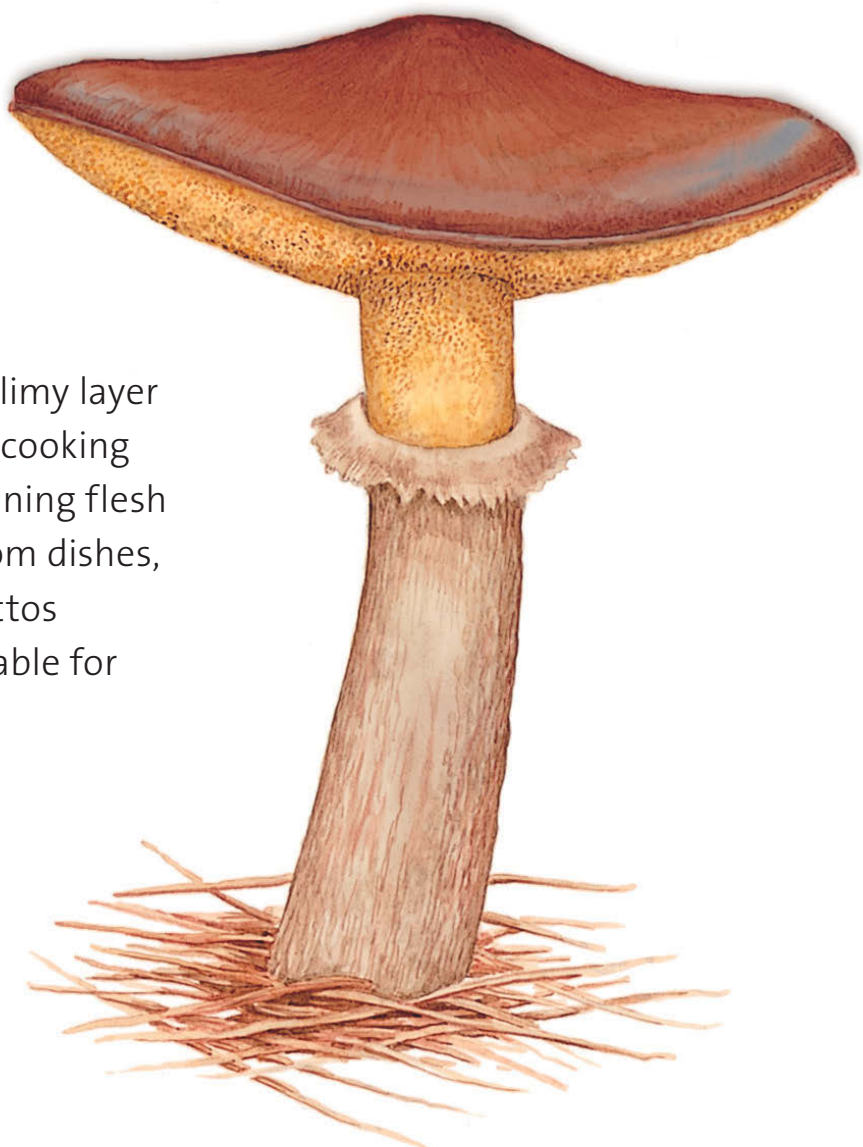
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on larch woodland soil, July to November.

Uses Remove the slimy layer on the cap before cooking and add the remaining flesh to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews, risottos and pies. Not suitable for preserving.

Slippery Jack
Suillus luteus

Description A convex, chocolate-brown cap, which is shiny and slimy when wet. Pores are medium-sized and lemon-yellow, becoming orange with age. Tubes and stem are straw-coloured, the latter with small, brown scales and a large, white ring that darkens with age. Flesh is thick, soft and yellowish with no distinctive odour or flavour. Grows 5–10cm across and 5–10cm tall.

Distribution Fairly common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on coniferous woodland soil, July to November.



Uses Remove the slimy layer on the cap before cooking and add the remaining flesh to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews, risottos and pies. Not suitable for preserving.

Brown Puffball

Bovista nigrescens

Description A ball-shaped fruiting body that grows white at first, with the outer layer flaking away to expose a shiny, blackish layer. The apex breaks open to release powdery spores, and the body itself will often break away from the substrate and roll around in the wind. The flesh is white and firm when young, becoming purplish-black and powdery. Grows 3–6cm across.

Distribution Common and widely distributed throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in open grassland, July to October.

Uses Young specimens can be halved and lightly sautéed with butter and garlic, or added to mixed mushroom dishes, stews, casseroles and meat and fish dishes. Best preserved in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Grey Puffball

Bovista plumbea

Description A ball-shaped fruiting body that is slightly pointed underneath, white at first before flaking away to reveal a greyish lower layer. Spores are released from a circular apical pore. The body itself often breaks away and rolls around in the wind. Flesh is firm and white when young, turning olive-green to brown and powdery. Grows 2–3cm across.

Distribution Common and widely distributed throughout northern Britain and Europe. Grows on short grass, lawns and golf courses, August to November.

Uses Young specimens can be halved and lightly sautéed with butter and fresh herbs, or added to mixed mushroom dishes, stews, casseroles and meat and fish dishes. Best preserved in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Giant Puffball

Calvatia gigantea

Description A ball-shaped fruiting body, white and leathery when young but becoming brownish-yellow with age. It eventually splits to release the spore mass, and the body itself will often break free and roll around in the wind. The flesh is firm and white when young, becoming rusty brown and powdery with age. Grows up to 80cm across and 80cm tall.

Distribution Widespread but uncommon throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in fields, woodlands, hedgerows and waste ground, July to October.

Uses Young specimens are edible as long as there is no yellowing of the flesh inside. Excellent cut into slices and fried like French toast, or try dicing, sautéing and tossing with chives and scrambled eggs. Not suitable for preserving.

Pestle Puffball

Lycoperdon excipuliforme

Description A pale buff to dull brown, pestle-shaped fruiting body, covered in small spines or warts that fall away to reveal a fragile inner wall. This wall eventually splits to release the spores, after which the empty cup will remain in place for many months. The flesh is firm and white at first, becoming olive-brown and powdery with age. Grows 3–10cm across and 8–20cm tall.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in pastures, woodland, heath and waste ground, August to December.

Uses Young specimens are edible as long as there is no yellowing of the flesh inside. Use like the giant puffball or add to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews, casseroles, omelettes and risottos. Not suitable for preserving.

Mosaic Puffball

Lycoperdon utriforme

Description A whitish, pear-shaped fruiting body that turns dark brown with age. The outer surface cracks into hexagonal patches that fall away to leave a fragile inner wall, which then splits to release the spores. The flesh is firm and white at first, becoming olive-brown and powdery with age. Grows 5–15cm across.

Distribution Uncommon but widely distributed throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in open grassland and sandy woodland edges, June to October.

Uses Young specimens are edible as long as there is no yellowing of the flesh inside. Use like the giant puffball or add to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews, casseroles, omelettes and risottos. Not suitable for preserving.

Common Puffball

Lycoperdon perlatum

Description A club-shaped fruiting body with a tall, cylindrical base. It is white when young, becoming pale brown with age, and covered with small warts that fall off to leave a mesh-like pattern. A round, apical pore then opens to release the spores. The flesh is firm and white, becoming olive-brown and powdery with age. Grows 2–6cm across and 2–9cm tall.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland leaf litter, June to January.

Uses Young specimens are delicious when fried with butter and herbs, or added to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews and casseroles. Preserve in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Stump Puffball
Apioperdon pyriforme

Description A yellowish-white, club-shaped fruiting body, covered in small spines or warts that fall off to reveal a papery inner layer. This then develops an apical pore that releases the spores. The flesh is firm and white when young, becoming olive-green and powdery with age. Grows up to 3cm across and 6cm tall.
Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on deciduous stumps and rotten wood, July to December.
Uses Like the common puffball, young specimens are delicious when fried with butter and herbs, or added to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews and casseroles.
Preserve in olive oil or cider vinegar.

Meadow Puffball

Lycoperdon pratense

Description A white, pear-shaped fruiting body with small granules and scales on the surface that fall off to remove a papery inner layer. This then develops an apical pore that releases the spores, after which the upper layer will eventually break off. The flesh is firm and white when young, becoming olive-brown and powdery with age. Grows 2–4cm across and 2–5cm tall.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in short grass, June to December.

Uses Like the common puffball, young specimens are delicious when fried with butter and herbs, or added to mixed mushroom dishes, soups, stews and casseroles. Preserve in olive oil or cider vinegar.

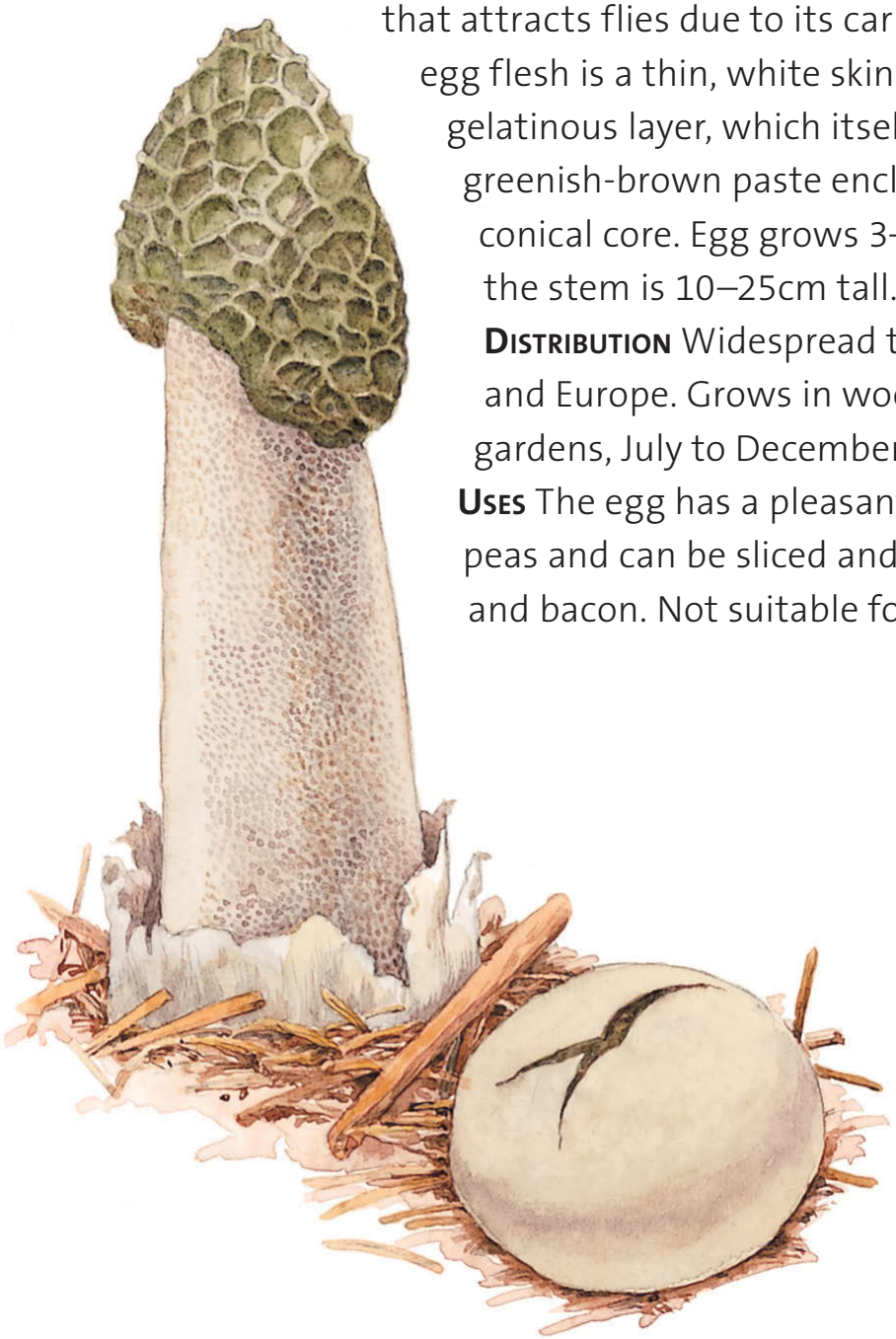
Common Stinkhorn

Phallus impudicus

Description The fruiting body produces an off-white 'egg' containing the spore mass and white stem, surrounded by a semi-transparent jelly. When mature, the stem pushes upwards and emerges from the egg, with a bell-shaped cap covered in dark, olive-green slime that attracts flies due to its carrion smell. The egg flesh is a thin, white skin enclosing a gelatinous layer, which itself surrounds a greenish-brown paste enclosing a white, conical core. Egg grows 3–6cm across and the stem is 10–25cm tall.

Distribution Widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows in woodland, parks and gardens, July to December.

Uses The egg has a pleasant flavour of raw peas and can be sliced and fried with butter and bacon. Not suitable for preserving.



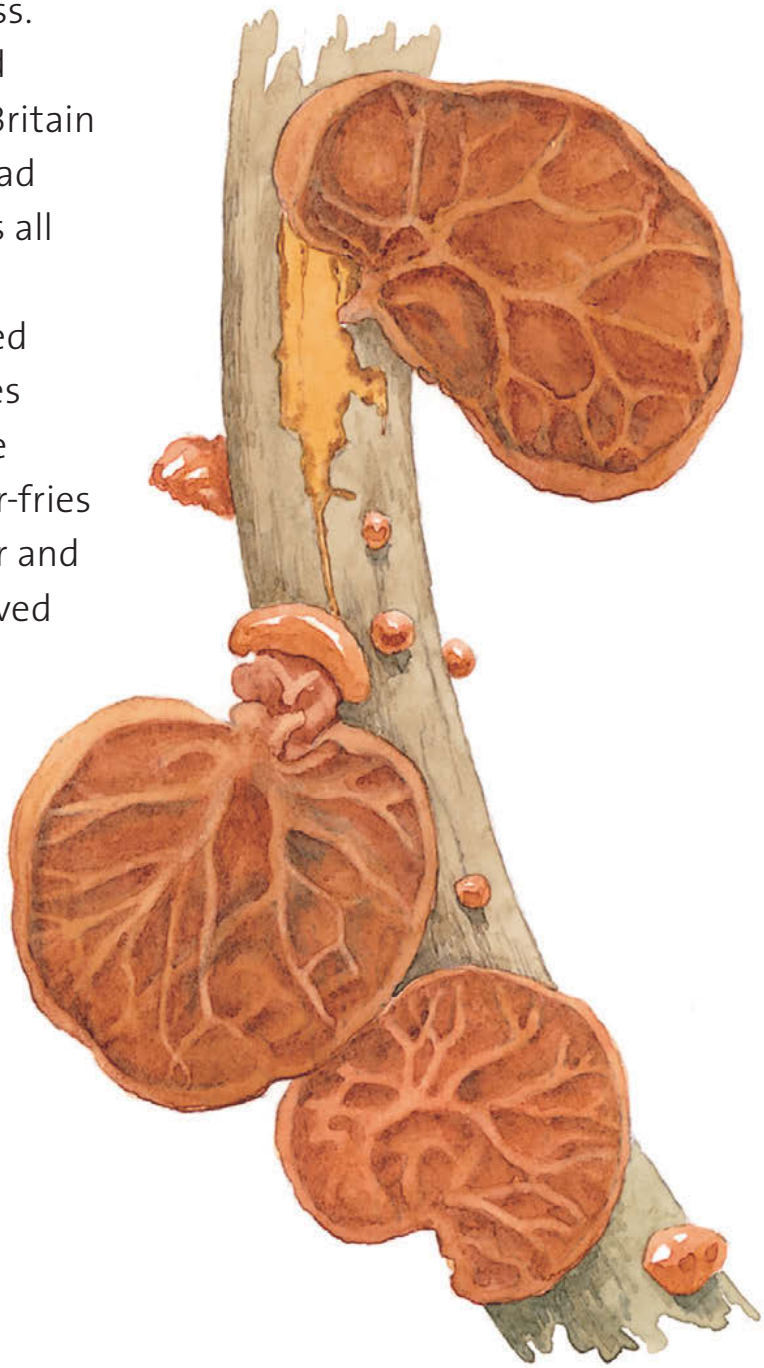
Jelly Ear

Auricularia auricula-judae

Description The upper surface of the fruiting body is reddish-brown and velvety, while the lower layer is purplish-brown and smooth. Ear-shaped with vein-like markings, the flesh is tough and elastic with no distinctive odour or taste, becoming dark, tough and leathery as it dries. Grows 3–8cm across.

Distribution Common and widespread throughout Britain and Europe. Grows on dead and dying broadleaf trees all year round.

Uses These are best cooked slowly in stews, casseroles and risottos to soften the flesh. Or try adding to stir-fries with chicken, fresh ginger and oyster sauce. Best preserved by drying, and they also reconstitute well when soaked in warm water, similar to porcini mushrooms.



Sea Lettuce

Ulva lactuca

Description A pale, watery green plant, growing up to 80cm long, that becomes a brighter and darker green as it grows with age. It appears as a flat, irregularly shaped membrane growing in bunches from a short, solid stalk.

Distribution Common on the coasts of the North Sea, English Channel, Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Uses Fresh leaves can be added to soups, noodle dishes and fish stews, or wrapped around fresh fish before baking. It can also be dried and ground into a powder which can be used to enhance fish dishes, savoury biscuits and pizza toppings.

Kelp
Laminaria digitata

Description A thick, leathery plant, reaching 2m long, with olive-brown to dark brown blades divided into strap-like segments. The smooth stalk attaches itself to rocks using a bunch of root-like processes that form a holdfast.

Distribution Common on the coasts of the North Sea, English Channel, Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Uses Fresh blades should be gathered in spring and early summer for the best flavour. Kelp can be used as a thickening agent in soups and stocks, or it can be dried and used as a flaked condiment. Try sprinkling over noodle soup with prawns and fresh ginger root.

Sugar Kelp
Laminaria saccharina

Description A wide, leathery plant, reaching 3m long, with sandy-yellow to olive-brown fronds with wavy edges, similar to a feather quill. Found on rocky shores and sand flats, as well as on rocks, stones, shells and in rockpools.

Distribution Widely distributed and abundant on the coasts of the North Sea, English Channel, western Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Uses Sugar kelp blades can be used like bay leaves to enhance the flavour of stews and casseroles. They can also be used raw in salads, added to soups as a thickener, or dried and ground as a condiment.

Bladderwrack

Fucus vesiculosus

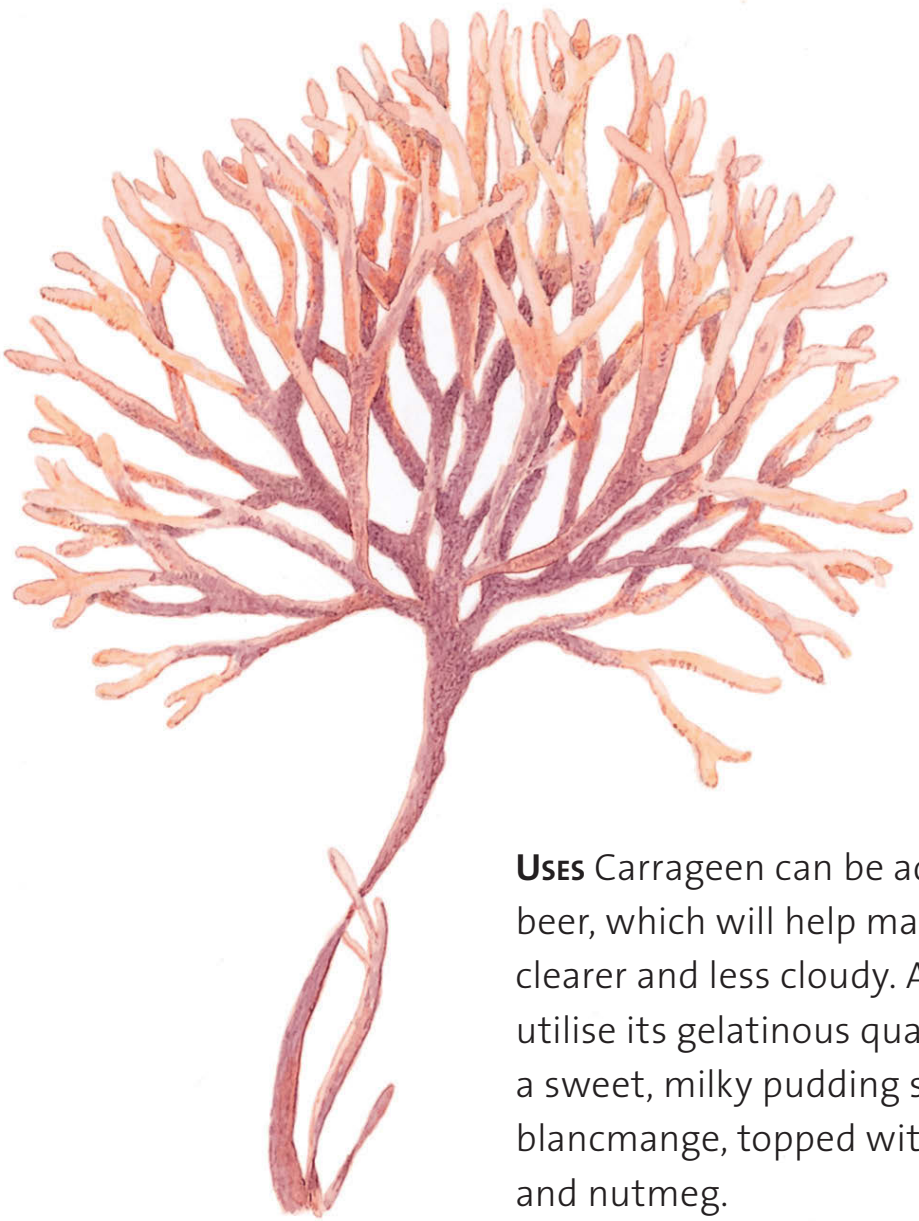
Description A thick, leathery seaweed, reaching 90cm long, made up of olive-brown to greyish-black air bladders. The edges of the fronds are smooth and wavy, while the plant attaches itself to surfaces using a disc-like holdfast.

Distribution Common and widespread on the coasts of the North Sea, English Channel, Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean south to the Bay of Biscay.

Uses Bladderwrack is best gathered in spring and early summer for optimum flavour. Rinse and dry branches and bake with sea salt, rosemary and chopped garlic to make seaweed crisps. Leaves can also be added to soups and stews as a thickener or dried and ground as a condiment.

Carrageen
Chondrus crispus

Description A dark red to pinkish-red plant growing up to 15cm long, although in bright light it can appear green. It appears as a flat frond forming wedge- or fan-shaped sections, and attaches itself to surfaces using a disc-like holdfast.
Distribution Common on the coasts of the North Sea, English Channel, western Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.



Uses Carrageen can be added to nettle beer, which will help make your beer clearer and less cloudy. Alternatively, utilise its gelatinous quality to make a sweet, milky pudding similar to blancmange, topped with cinnamon and nutmeg.

Pepper Dulse
Laurencia pinnatifida

Description A purplish-red plant that divides dichotomously into progressively smaller branches, forming small tridents at the end of each branch. It can either grow in dense, luxurious tufts in crevices, or if more exposed it is yellowish-green and will grow more sparsely. Grows up to 10cm long.

Distribution Common on the coasts of the North Sea, English Channel, Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Uses Pepper dulse is rather fiery and can be sprinkled into stews, casseroles, soups and tagines for a flavour boost. Try pan-frying mackerel fillets with a seasoning of pepper dulse, sea salt and chilli flakes.

Dulse

Rhodymenia palmata

Description A dark to brownish-red plant with purple tones, reaching 40cm long, variable in size and shape. It can grow as a single blade or be divided into several strap-like segments with rounded tips. The whole plant secures itself to surfaces using a disc-like holdfast.

Distribution Common on the coasts of the North Sea, English Channel, western Baltic Sea and Atlantic Ocean.

Uses Dulse can be eaten fresh from the sea after a quick rinse, or fronds can be laid out to dry in the sun for a delicious, crispy snack. It can also be added to soups, sandwiches and salads, or added to buttery mashed potatoes to make a traditional Irish 'champ'.

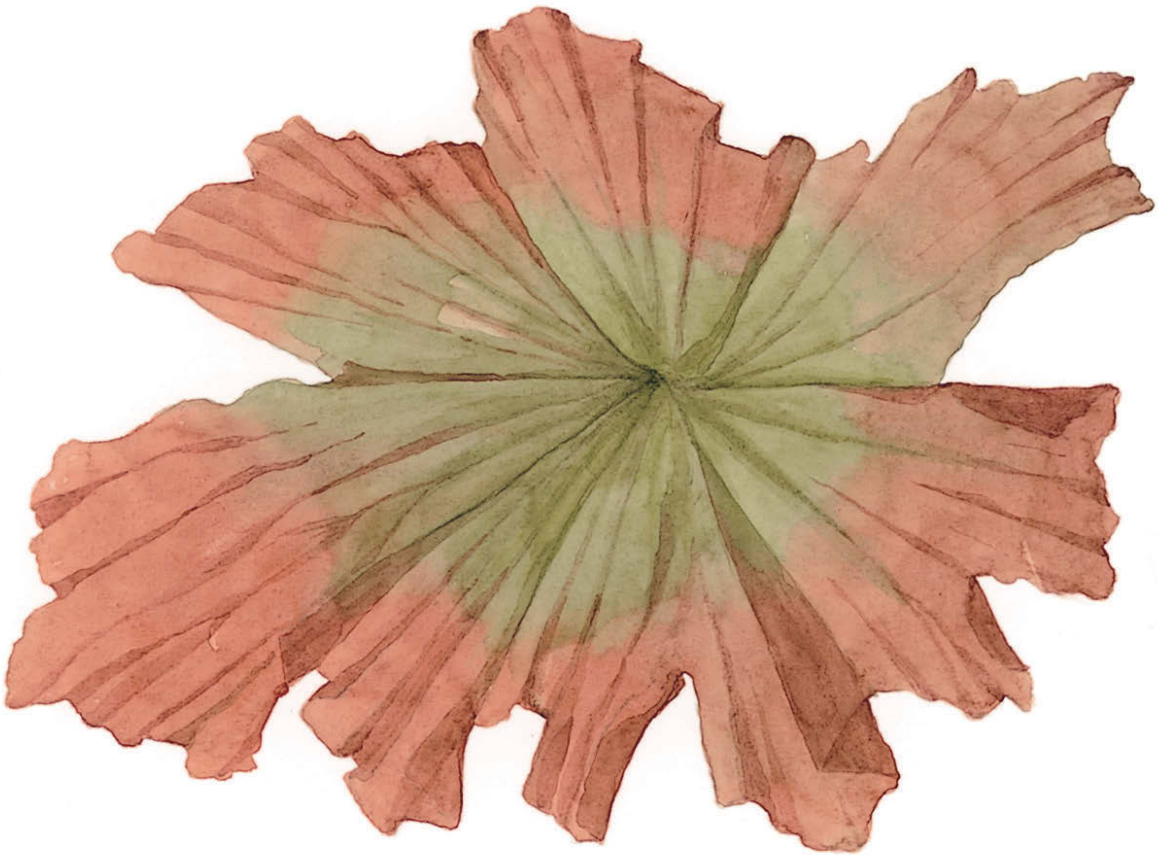
Laver

Porphyra umbilicalis

Description A dark, purplish-red plant reaching 25cm long that turns greenish-brown with age. It appears as a flat, membranous frond divided into lobes, forming a pendulous shape that is attached to surfaces by a single point.

Distribution Common on the coasts of the North Sea, English Channel and Atlantic Ocean.

Uses Laver weed is the main ingredient in laverbread, a Welsh delicacy made of oatmeal. Boil the laver for six hours before mixing with the oatmeal, squashing into little cakes and frying in bacon fat or olive oil for a delicious breakfast.



Common Cockle

Cerastoderma edule

Description Shells are white, whitish-yellow or brown, and grow up to 6cm long. They are oval-shaped and covered in ribs that flatten in the middle part of the shell. The inner shell is dull white, and the fleshy muscle inside is reddish-orange.

Distribution Common and widespread along Atlantic coasts, the English Channel, the North Sea and the Mediterranean. Can be harvested all year round, but best collected from September to April from sandy beaches at low tide.

Uses Wash off any sand and mud then soak overnight. Can be eaten raw with vinegar and brown bread, or try boiling and steaming the shells and using the muscle in soups, stews, pasta or with scrambled eggs for breakfast.

Common Mussel

Mytulis edulis

Description Shell is triangular and elongated – up to 10cm long – with rounded edges and smooth, concentric growth lines. Shell colour is purple, blue or brownish with occasional muted stripes. The inner flesh is white and reddish-orange.

Distribution Common and widespread along Atlantic coasts, the English Channel, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean. Can be harvested all year round, but best collected from September to April from clean rocky shores at low tide.

Uses After soaking in two changes of water, excellent boiled or steamed and served in a broth of cream, white wine, garlic and parsley, or with cider and fried bacon.

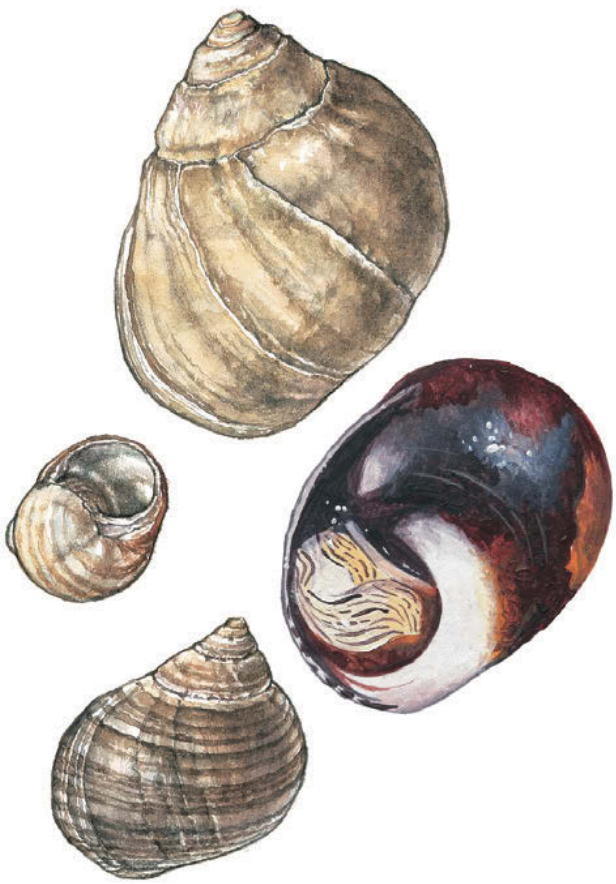
Common Periwinkle

Littorina littorea

Description Similar to land snails, periwinkles have a dark brown or grey spiral-banded shell with small eye stalks pointing out and grow up to 2.5cm long.

Distribution Common and widespread along the north-eastern coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, including northern Spain, France, England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Scandinavia and Russia. Can be harvested all year round, but best collected from September to April from rocky shores at low tide.

Uses After soaking, traditionally eaten by steaming or boiling in salted water, then twisting out the cooked flesh with a pin. Also good dipped in garlic butter. Using your pin, remove and discard the small, shiny plate near the mouth of the shell before you eat the flesh.



Common Limpet

Patella vulgata

Description The outer shell is greyish-white in colour, conically shaped with radiating ridges growing up to 6cm long. The inner shell is smooth and greyish-green. The flesh is whitish-grey to pale brown.

Distribution Common and widespread along the Atlantic, English Channel and North Sea coasts. Can be harvested all year round, but best collected from September to April from rocky shores at low tide.

Uses Dislodge individual limpets from rocks by prising them with a knife or knocking them sideways. If the first knock fails, abandon the limpet and try another as most likely, they will have attached even tighter to the rock. After soaking, can be boiled until the meat floats free of the shell or eaten raw; even better grilled with garlic butter.

Glossary

Annual A plant that lives for one year or less, perpetuating itself by seed.
Axil The upper angle between a stalk and the stem from which it is growing.
Biennial A plant that takes two years to grow from seed, bear fruit and die.
Bract A small leaf with a flower or flower cluster in its axil.
Bulbil A small bulb-like structure growing in the axil of a leaf, which may fall to form a new plant.
Calyx A whorl of flower sepals that forms a protective layer around the flower in bud.
Catkin A dangling, flowering spike found on trees like willow and hazel, pollinated by the wind.
Corolla A whorl of flower petals that encloses the flower's reproductive organs.
Holdfast A stalked organ that attaches an aquatic plant to a substrate.
Husk The dry outer covering of some fruits or seeds.
Latex A milky substance exuding from some mushroom species, especially when they are freshly cut.
Palmate A leaf with five or more lobes radiating from one point.
Perennial A plant that lives for several years.
Pinnate A leaf with leaflets arranged on either side of the stem, typically in opposing pairs.
Rhizome An underground stem growing horizontally that puts out lateral shoots and roots at intervals.
Sepal Each of the parts of a flower's calyx; typically green and leaflike, the sepals enclose and protect the flower in bud and support the petals in bloom.
Stolon A creeping plant stem that takes root at different points to form new plants.
Trifoliate A leaf made up of three leaflets.
Tuber The thick, underground part of a stem or rhizome that bears buds from which new plants arise.
Umbel A flower cluster in which stalks of nearly equal length grow from a common centre and form a flat or curved surface.

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Acknowledgements

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Common Edible Species by Habitat

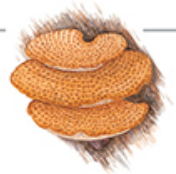
Woodland

Hawthorn

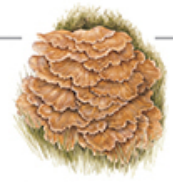
Elder

Blackberry

Wild Strawberry


Dryad's Saddle

Chanterelle


Hen of the Woods

Giant Puffball

Comfrey

Hazel

Oak

Garlic Mustard

Wild Garlic

Oyster Mushroom

Trooping Funnel

Wood Blewit

Jelly Ear

Fragrant Funnel

Coast

Sea Buckthorn

Hottentot Fig

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Common Orache

Sea Purslane

Sea Lettuce

Kelp

Sugar Kelp

Bladderwrack

Marsh Samphire

Black Mustard

Lovage

Fennel

Wild Cabbage

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Heathland

Rowan

Heather

Gorse

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Bitter Vetch

Chamomile

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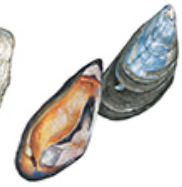
Common Cockle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Rosebay Willowherb

Cranberry

Cloudberry

Cowberry

Crowberry

Juniper

Bilberry

Winkle or Periwinkle

Limpet

Meadow

Dog Rose

Dandelion

Common Poppy

Common Nettle

Hop

Cuckooflower

Common Mallow

Sweet Cicely

Alexanders

Goosegrass

Common Valerian

Lesser Burdock

Wild Marjoram

Meadowsweet

Yarrow

Borage

Field Blewit

Horse Mushroom

Edible Species by Season

Spring

Garlic Mustard

Wild Garlic

Common Valerian

Woodruff

Ground Ivy

Common Nettle

Good King Henry

Fat Hen

Winter Cress

Watercress

Cuckooflower

Sweet Cicely

Ground Elder

Wild Marjoram

Yarrow

Sea Beet

Black Mustard

Jewel Weed

Summer

Elder (flower)

Wild Strawberries

Lesser Burdock

Lime

Herb Bennet

Pignut

Common Mallow

Marsh Samphire

Chamomile

Meadowsweet

Guelder Rose

Dog Rose

Blackcurrant

Gooseberry

Common Poppy

Hop

Rosebay Willowherb

Bog Myrtle

Autumn

Blackberry

Juniper

Rowan

Barberry

Crab Apple

Hawthorn

Blackthorn

Field Blewit

Giant Puffball

Elder (berries)

Sweet Chestnut

Oak

Walnut

Hazel

Sea Buckthorn

Bitter Vetch

Wood Cauliflower

Dryad's Saddle

Winter

Alexanders

Wild Parsnip

Ruby Elfcup

Chanterelle

Winter Chanterelle

Chicken of the Woods

Aniseed Cockleshell

Oyster Mushroom

Scarlet Waxcap

Honey Fungus

Goblet

Aniseed Funnel

Fragrant Funnel

Velvet Shank

Grey Knight

Wood Blewit

Mild Milkcap

Jelly Ear